

ATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1995

2-year-old saved from drowning alert dog

MARSEILLE (AP) — A two-year-old girl was rescued from drowning by a puppy which had been trained to alert her mother when she was in trouble.

Workers dig up bomb in Italy

RAVENNA, Italy (AP) — Workers digging for a bomb Thursday found a 1980s-era device, but it was not a threat to the town of 100,000 people.

The Cuban president

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — President Fidel Castro said he would not visit the United States for the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution.

Man with no seeks damage after blast

SENLIS, France (AP) — A man whose house was blown off its foundations by a car bomb in Senlis, France, Wednesday, said he was not seeking compensation.

67 dead in north Iraq clashes

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Zhirinovsky heads for Iraq

AMMAN (AP) — Russian opposition leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky headed for Baghdad via Jordan on Saturday to consolidate relations with Moscow's one-time ally. Mr. Zhirinovsky, accompanied by 50 Russian lawmakers from the Liberal Democratic Party which he heads, landed at Queen Alia International Airport aboard a chartered plane. The Russian team, which also included military officials, businessmen and journalists, immediately boarded two buses that headed for Jordan's eastern border. The group was expected in Baghdad Sunday morning. Iraqi embassy officials said the Russian nationalist leader was scheduled to meet with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and other officials during his three-day stay. Before his departure, Mr. Zhirinovsky said he sought to strengthen "our relations with Iraq" and show solidarity with the Iraqi people. The 49-year-old politician urged an immediate lifting of crippling sanctions imposed against Baghdad shortly after the Aug. 2, 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. "Sanctions must be eliminated this year," he said, echoing calls by the Russian government, which along with France and China, have been rallying for easing the embargo.

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Saudi-Yemeni accord reported

JEDDAH (AFP) — Saudi Arabia and Yemen have found a way to settle a border dispute that has erupted into armed clashes recently, a Yemeni negotiator said Saturday. The two sides reached agreement on a declaration of principles on outstanding issues concerning their land dispute and an accord will be signed over the weekend in Jeddah, he told AFP on condition his name not be used.

Kaddoumi meets Iraqi leaders

BAGHDAD (R) — Farouk Kaddoumi, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) foreign affairs chief, is holding talks in Baghdad with senior Iraqi officials. Palestinian Ambassador Azam Al Ahmad said on Saturday. Mr. Kaddoumi arrived in Baghdad on Friday and told reporters that the troubled PLO-Israeli peace process should be stopped. "The Palestinians should halt the peace process," he said. Mr. Azam said Mr. Kaddoumi met Iraqi Foreign Affairs Minister Mohammed Saeed Al Sahaf on Saturday. Iraq's official media have not reported the PLO officials' visit yet. "In the face of obstacles confronting the peace process, it is inevitable to hold such discussions with Iraqi brethren," Mr. Azam said.

Kamal rejoices in Israeli deaths

CAIRO (R) — A senior Arab League official was quoted on Saturday as saying he rejoiced to hear of Israeli deaths in operations by militants. Said Kamal, assistant secretary-general for Palestinian affairs, told a seminar on Islam: "When Hamas kills an Israeli, although my thinking is not in keeping with theirs, I feel exultant. For an operation in Israel quenches the thirst for revenge of all the Arabs." Mr. Kamal, who was the Palestine Liberation Organisation's ambassador in Cairo for many years until last year, was quoted in a report on the seminar in the opposition party newspaper Al Wafd. It did not say when he was speaking.

U.S. Navy diverts more Gulf ships

BAHRAIN (AP) — The U.S. Navy has diverted three more ships sailing from Iraq following "substantial evidence" that they were involved in U.N. sanctions busting, a spokesman said Saturday. Commander T. McCreary, spokesman for the Gulf-based U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, said the St. Vincent-flagged Express-1 was intercepted and diverted on Feb. 10 while carrying 1,500 tonnes of dates. On Feb. 12, the tugboat Shamira, which flies the United Arab Emirates flag, was intercepted and diverted while towing a barge called Fardis-2 that was carrying 800 tonnes of diesel fuel. On Feb. 17, the Bahrain-flagged Trenton was intercepted while carrying 731 tonnes of dates and was also diverted.

67 dead in north Iraq clashes

NICOSIA (AFP) — At least 67 people have died in four days of bitter fighting between Kurds in northern Iraq, a leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) said Saturday. The bloodiest day came on Tuesday when fighting for control of Kazana, 25 kilometres east of Erbil, "left 26 PUK supporters dead and 41 in the rival ranks of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)," he told AFP in Cyprus that KDP members were also thought to have died in "an ambush on Thursday close to Rawanduz," 30 kilometres northeast of Erbil and held by the PUK. There were other clashes at the beginning of the week in Shuman, Hajimur and Kasir further east and on Friday in Penjwin, close to the border with Iran. But Mr. Ismail, a PUK representative in Europe, could not give any casualty figures.

Israel widens blockade on fishing off Lebanon

SIDON, Lebanon (Agencies) — Israel, intensifying a battle of wills with Lebanon, widened on Saturday its blockade against fishermen in South Lebanon's cities of Tyre and Sidon to include Damour, only 18 kilometres south of Beirut.

President Elias Hrawi appealed to the United States, Russia and Europe to help rein in Israeli attacks and end the naval blockade of South Lebanese ports. In Damascus, Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri held talks with Syrian leaders on Beirut's latest attempt to halt Israeli artillery attacks on southern Lebanon, Lebanese sources said.

Mr. Hariri, accompanied by his Defence Minister Mohsen Dallu, met with Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam after the Lebanese government launched a diplomatic drive to pressure Israel into halting the attacks. Syria is the main foreign power broker in Lebanon where it maintains about 35,000 troops.

After a week of violence in and around Israel's self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon, the ambassadors of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council met Friday in Beirut with the secretary general of the foreign ministry, Zafer Al Hassan. Foreign Minister Fares

Bouez also asked Lebanon's ambassadors to Washington and the U.N. headquarters in New York to set up "urgent" contacts with the State Department and U.N. officials over the matter. Fishermen said two Israeli gunboats appeared off Damour at dawn firing warning machinegun volleys before telling fishermen from Sidon to the south, South Lebanon's biggest port where the blockade was imposed two days ago, to stop fishing and go back.

The Israeli navy imposed similar restrictions against the ancient port of Tyre, 76 kilometres south of Beirut, for the past 17 days, telling fishermen to stop sailing at night or venturing more than one kilometre into the sea. "Do we have to hunt dogs to live?" fisherman Ahmad Al Babour, who has six children, said of the blockade which now threatens the livelihood of some 1,800 fishermen along a 70-kilometre stretch of Lebanese coast from Naqoura to Damour.

"They (Israelis) began with Tyre then Sidon and today they forbid us from fishing off Damour. We don't know what's next," said Mustafa Bawji, another one of Sidon's 300 fishermen forced to seek other areas for stock. "This is unbearable." Israel maintained an official silence on Saturday. An Israeli government

spokesman refused to comment on Lebanon's statement that the sea blockade was slapped to force the Lebanese army to ease security checks on residents travelling to and from Israel's South Lebanon occupation zone.

"The government need not respond publicly to everything that is reportedly happening in Lebanon," the spokesman said. But an Israeli government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Lebanon was "on the right track" in linking the sea blockade to the security restrictions, which Beirut refused to ease arguing they were legitimate.

Israeli security sources confirmed navy gunboats had enforced a blockade against fishing in Tyre area for 17 days. Reuter photographers saw fishermen in four boats just off the coast of Saadiyya, five kilometres south of Damour.

"This blockade means cutting our livelihood because fishing near the coast is not even enough to feed a baby," Hussein Al Qors, a 60-year-old fisherman who has 10 children, said. "We plead to our officials to do something. This tragic situation can continue," Ahmad Al Sin, 58, said. President Hrawi on Friday appealed to the United



KING HOSTS FAR. His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday hosted an iftar in honour of tribal leaders and representatives of private and public institutions in Jerash Governorate. The banquet was attended by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Otaibi, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, the

King's Cultural Secretary Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad, the King's advisor on tribal affairs, the secretary general of the Royal Court, the imam of the Royal Court and the governor of Jerash. The King and the guests performed Maghreb prayers together (Petra photo)

Attack on diplomat isolated incident — Bajolet

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The attack against a French diplomat in southern Jordan on Friday was an isolated incident and was not targeted against France or French interests in particular, French Ambassador Bernard Bajolet said Saturday. Mr. Bajolet said "the Jordanian authorities are still investigating the motive behind it, but we have no reason to think

the attack was targeted against the French."

Second Secretary at the French Embassy Gilles Hein was shot and wounded by two men on Friday noon while on a visit in the south. Mr. Hein is now recovering at the Hussein Medical City. The two assailants, said to be from Karak, were immediately arrested after the attack, security sources said on Friday.

Mr. Hein was initially transferred to Madaba

hospital and then flown by a helicopter to the Hussein Medical City.

The French ambassador said Mr. Hein was doing well.

The head of the Police Department, Lieutenant General Abdul Rahman Adwan, Saturday received in his office the patrol policemen who arrested the assailants. He presented "patrolmen with medal recognition of their bravery and successful mission in arresting the assailants

in a short period of time.

The French ambassador said the efforts exerted by the Jordanian authorities were exceptional.

"We express our full appreciation to and deep satisfaction with the extensive efforts and continuous support the Jordanian authorities and officials alike showed," said Mr. Bajolet. "We are thankful to all the attention and care we received at the highest level."

Talibans collect heavy weapons in Kabul

CHARASYAB (AFP) — Militant Taliban fighters said Saturday there would be fighting in the Afghan capital of Kabul if the city's arsenal was not handed over to them. "Fighting is inevitable if they block our (arms collection) process," said Taliban commander Rahmatullah at their Charasyab base, 25 kilometres southeast of Kabul. There is currently a 30-day ceasefire effective until March 21 between the Taliban and forces loyal to Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, who face each other across the frontlines just 15 kilometres southeast of Kabul. "Our objective is to collect all war material in Afghanistan, and the people are happy with this," Rahmatullah said.

Christopher still planning Mideast trip despite ulcer

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Secretary of State Warren Christopher, hospitalised overnight with a bleeding stomach ulcer, has affirmed that he still planned to go to the Middle East next month. "As the doctor said, 'I'm fit as fiddle,'" Mr. Christopher said after returning with President Bill Clinton after a two-day state visit to Canada. Mr. Christopher, wearing a shirt and necktie and appearing in good spirits, told reporters, "I wanted you to see I'm alive and well."

"I felt lousy yesterday. By the end of the day, I knew something was going on... they were able to stop the bleeding very quickly. It was really a minor incident and it's all behind me," he added. Mr. Christopher, who received treatment at Ottawa's Civic Hospital, described Canada's state-run health system as "terrific."

He said he would spend a day or two at Washington's Georgetown University Medical Centre "just to make sure that there's no restarting but I think I'm fine. I feel very good today."

Mr. Christopher, who took ill Thursday, said doctors in Ottawa had told him there was no reason why he could not travel to the Middle East next month. A tentative date of March 7 or 8 has been set for the trip, Mr. Christopher's eighth official visit to the region.

The top U.S. diplomat hopes to revive stalled talks between Israel and Syria, and give a boost to negotiations between Israel and the

Palestinians on extending Palestinian autonomy in the occupied West Bank.

The State Department said he would also make stopovers in the Gulf but spokeswoman Christine Shelly did not give details of the itinerary.

A State Department official said separately that Mr. Christopher would travel to Saudi Arabia.

The 69-year-old secretary of state was also scheduled to address congressional committees on Wednesday and Thursday.

State Department spokesman David Johnson earlier insisted that there were no "long-term implications" in Mr. Christopher's medical condition, adding: "He is in

Rivals gun for Balladur, exploit Franco-U.S. spy row

PARIS (Agencies) — Prime Minister Edouard Balladur struggled to put a damaging Franco-American spy row behind him on Saturday as rivals in the presidential race charged it had ridiculed French foreign policy.

The Socialist Party, whose candidate Lionel Jospin is snapping at Mr. Balladur's heels in the campaign for the April-May election, said the dispute showed the conservative premier was ill-suited for the job of head of state. Socialist leader Henri Emmanuelli urged Mr. Balladur to "end the government cacophony over a fantastic spy affair which threatens our country's image." Party spokesman Jean Glavany echoed: "The dignity of France in the world is at stake."

given to France's request to Washington to recall five Americans, including four diplomats it accused of industrial and political espionage, has embarrassed Mr. Balladur and divided his government.

"The incredible has become credible — what if Balladur, pushed by Interior Minister Charles Pasqua, were suddenly forced to make anti-Americanism one of the pillars of his presidential campaign?" asked the leftist daily Liberation.

"The more than careless management of the crisis is ridiculing France and those who claim to govern it."

Mr. Balladur has signalled that he wanted to defuse the dispute, saying: "I don't think anyone will have any more comments."

He followed his own advice on Saturday and remained tight-lipped on the row, receiving a delegation of textile industry trade unions at his

The French constitution gives the president the last say in foreign and defence policy.

The row over publicity

(Continued on page 7)

Designated premier heads for Chechnya

MOZDOK, Russia (Agencies) — Heavy fighting erupted in Grozny Saturday and in village south and west of the Chechen capital, the Interfax news agency reported. Although Russia has achieved only partial control of the feisty little breakaway, the new Moscow-designated prime minister of Chechnya is promising free elections and a referendum on sovereignty. "We will build peace, hold free elections and bring about voluntary disarmament — but (Chechen rebel leader) Dzhokhar) Dudayev must leave power," Solambek Khadjiev, a former Soviet chemical industry minister, said Friday.

Speaking at Russian military headquarters in Mozdok, Mr. Khadjiev said he hoped to go to the Chechen capital on Saturday to take up his new duties. He said he informed Russian President Boris Yeltsin of the makeup of his new government on Thursday. Mr. Khadjiev's comments came as an international human rights group in Moscow condemned Russian forces for "gross abuses" in Chechnya and said civilian suffering is spreading. Mr. Khadjiev, who claims he was elected by the Chechen opposition's provisional council, told reporters: "We also need a referendum on sovereignty — we've agreed this with the federal powers."

Meanwhile a black cloud of oily smoke darkened the skies over Grozny after a night of heavy Russian shelling, witnesses said. It was not clear what had caused the smoke in the city, a major oil refining centre. Since reporters were unable to reach Grozny from the rebel side. Officials in Moscow and Nazran, capital of neighbouring Ingushetia, said they had not heard of any major fire. Russian artillery pounded Chechen positions outside Grozny throughout the night and into Saturday, trying to stop Chechen infiltration of the city and cut off routes into the capital. The rebels say they will eventually take their fight to the mountains south of Grozny.

(Continued on page 7)

Fears on the rise in Lebanon of massive Israeli attack

BEIRUT (R) — Fears are growing in Beirut that Israel may launch a wide-scale operation in South Lebanon after its repeated bombardment of civilian areas and widening of a fishing blockade against the region's seaports.

A government minister said late on Thursday that Lebanon had begun a flurry of diplomatic contact to stop the situation worsening on one of the last active Arab-Israeli frontlines.

"There is grave concern in Lebanon of widening of this (sea) blockade and of wide military operations," the minister, who declined to be named, told reporters.

Lebanese Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Zafer Al Hassan was to hold talks on Friday with ambassadors of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council to probe their willingness to back a formal complaint by Beirut on the Israeli aggression.

Eight Lebanese civilians were wounded by shellfire on Thursday from Israeli forces occupying a South Lebanon border zone, in response to guerrilla attacks that wounded one Israeli soldier and an allied militiaman.

Israeli gunboats simultaneously extended a two-week naval blockade against fishermen in the port of Tyre to Sidon, South Lebanon's biggest port, saying if they sail at night or venture more than one kilometre from the shore they risk being fired on.

"The Lebanese concern stems from the Israeli aggression and the expansion of the blockade. Yesterday it was imposed on Tyre today Sidon," the minister said.

Labour Minister Abdullah Al Amin, a close friend of Syria, said on Thursday Lebanon could shell Israeli towns and villages if Israel continued to bombard South Lebanon town and villages.

"If the aggression expands we have the ability to disturb the Israelis wherever they are. If the aggression expands to reach (Lebanese) towns and villages we are able to reply in the same way by shelling towns and villages in

Israel," Mr. Amin said. Mr. Amin expressed anger at the United States, saying it was responsible for the frequent Israeli shelling in South Lebanon.

"The United States has threatened Lebanon it will revert to the veto if Lebanon complains to the United Nations," he added.

But the Foreign Ministry in Beirut instructed its ambassador in Washington Riad Tabbara to hold "speedy contacts" with the American administration over the situation in South Lebanon.

Mr. Tabbara was expected to meet soon with Robert Pelletreau, U.S. assistant secretary of state for Middle Eastern affairs, "to demand the United States to end the attacks and the blockade," the minister said.

Beirut also told its U.N. Ambassador Samir Mubarak to consult with United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Ghali on the feasibility of Beirut lodging a formal complaint.

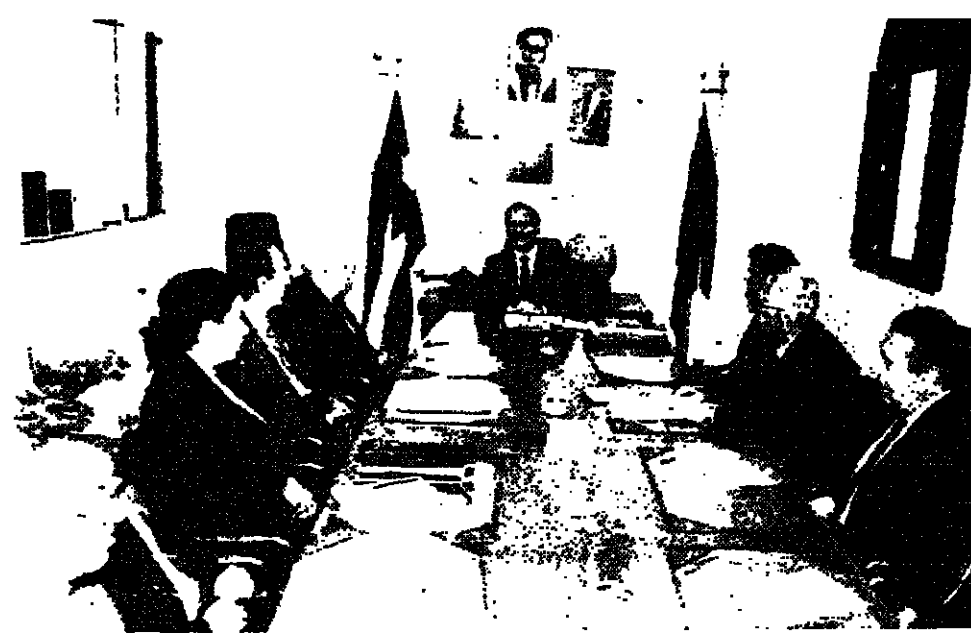
"In light of these contacts, there will be an assessment whether to file a complaint or not," the minister said.

Lebanese politicians have said Israel enforced the blockade to force the Lebanese army to ease security checks on residents travelling to and from Israel's occupation zone in the south.

Lebanon — arguing pro-Israeli agents from the zone were behind a December bombing that killed three people in Beirut — has refused to ease the checks which it said were legitimate.

Israel, though vowing to pursue guerrilla beyond the border zone, said this week it would avoid a repetition of massive campaigns like its ferocious 1993 air-and-artillery onslaught which killed 150 civilians and sent tens of thousands of Lebanese villagers fleeing.

The week-long campaign, launched in retaliation for rocket attacks on Israel, was stopped by a U.S.-brokered agreement in which the Jewish state and the guerrillas pledged to refrain from attacking civilian centres.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Saturday meets a committee in charge of organising a conference in Italy on Jordan's history (Petra photo)

Turin to host international conference on Jordan's history

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Saturday emphasised the importance of a planned international conference on the history and archaeology of Jordan and said it would help further highlight the country's antiquities and historical importance.

Speaking at a meeting at the Royal Court with the committee which is preparing for the conference to be held in the Italian city of Turin in June, Prince Hassan expressed hope that the conference

would further focus light on Jordan's ancient and modern history.

The committee, led by professor Giorgio Gullini, head of the centre in Turin University which is organising the conference, briefed the Crown Prince on the preparations for the meeting, which will be held under the title: "The Use of Land and Settlement Throughout the Various Ages."

The six-day conference is expected to review 105 research papers presented by delegates from Europe, the

United States and Jordan.

The committee groups heads of archaeology departments at the University of Jordan, Yarmouk University and Mutah University, in addition to the heads of archaeology research centres operating in Jordan.

Saturday's meeting was attended by Her Highness Princess Sumayya Bishr Al Hassan and Dr. Ghazi Bishr, director general of the Department of Antiquities, and Italian Ambassador to Jordan Romualdo Bettini.

Settlers strike Palestinians

HEBRON, occupied West Bank (R) — Scores of Jewish settlers kicked and shoved Palestinian worshippers on Saturday next to the Hebron Mosque where a settler killed more than 30 Palestinians at prayer one year ago, witnesses said.

They said Israeli soldiers standing guard near the mosque did little to stop about 60 settlers from trying to block Palestinians from entering the mosque, where Muslims were gathering to observe the holiday of Lailat Al Qadr.

Settlers also shoved news photographers at the scene. Occupied Hebron, long a flashpoint of Arab-Jewish violence, exploded on Feb. 25, 1994, when U.S.-born Jewish settler Baruch Goldstein sprayed automatic fire on kneeling Arabs before survivors of the massacre beat him to death.

Last week, in scenes reminiscent of the seven-year-long Palestinian uprising, Israeli soldiers shot dead one Arab and wounded seven others in Hebron during demonstrations marking the anniversary of the massacre.

Two days later hundreds of settlers defied threats of prosecution and rabbinical condemnation to hold a memorial service at Goldstein's grave in the Hebron-area settlement of Kiryat Arava.

Greece: Cyprus key to EU-Turkey union

ATHENS (R) — Greece said on Friday its objections to a European Union (EU) customs agreement with Turkey would be lifted only if a specific timetable was set for the accession of Cyprus to the EU.

Government spokesman Evangelos Venizelos said Athens wants an existing EU document to say talks with Cyprus "will start" within six months after a 1996 inter-governmental conference instead of "could start."

"If the phrasing is put this way — something that is accepted by the EU's French presidency — then the Greek government will agree (to the customs union). Our position is clear," Mr. Venizelos told reporters.

The Greek position was transmitted on Thursday to France, current president of

the 15-member EU, and Mr. Venizelos said he was confident other member states would accept the Greek demand.

"I don't see any reason not to accept it," he said.

Greece adopted in principle the customs union deal with Turkey during an EU foreign ministers' meeting on Feb. 6 but later rejected it, setting four new conditions.

They included more specific dates and procedures on EU membership for Cyprus, a reduction in money offered to Ankara, and more aid to Greece's textile industry, expected to suffer from closer ties between the EU and Turkey.

Mr. Venizelos said Athens insisted on all four conditions but stressed that the Cyprus issue was the most important.

Closer EU-Turkey relations have been blocked for years by the row between Athens and Ankara over Cyprus.

France has been seeking ways to meet Greece's new demands before a planned "association council" with Turkey on March 6, on the sidelines of a regular meeting of EU foreign ministers.

It offered Greece a counter-proposal to its four demands on Wednesday when Deputy Foreign Minister George Mangakis travelled to Paris for talks with the French government.

On Thursday Athens sent its answer to the French but did not make it public.

If an agreement is reached, France would take the deal to the other EU members for approval, Mr. Mangakis said.

The customs union, which foresees sharp two-way reductions in trade barriers by 1996, would give Turkey some of the closest links to the EU of a non-member country and unblock as much as \$1 billion in aid.

Greece's objections are not the only ones the French must overcome before the customs deal is in the final stretch.

The European Parliament cast further doubt on the deal last week when it said Turkey's human rights record was not good enough for the agreement to be allowed to go through at present.

Under the Maastricht Treaty on economic and monetary union the parliament, the EU's only directly elected body, has the power to block such deals.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mitterrand in Egypt on private visit

ASWAN, Egypt (R) — French President Francois Mitterrand arrived in the southern Egyptian resort town of Aswan on Thursday for a week-long private visit, officials said on Saturday. Mr. Mitterrand usually spends the Christmas and New Year holidays cruising up the Nile from the ancient pharaonic capital Luxor to Aswan, but could not do so this year due to ill-health, they said. News of his arrival was delayed until Saturday for security reasons. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was due to visit Mr. Mitterrand in Aswan within the next two days, officials said. The French leader would then go to an area in southern Sinai known as St. Catherine's, site of an ancient monastery believed to be the burial site of the legendary martyr of Alexandria. Mr. Mitterrand is expected to head back to France on March 1, they said.

2 Pakistanis killed in road smash in Cyprus

NICOSIA (AFP) — Two Pakistani students were killed instantly in a road smash in Cyprus early Saturday when their motorbike was hit by a car driven by a British soldier, police said. Khan Athar Hussain, 18 and his cousin Khan Amir, 21, were thrown from the bike and the car driven by Sergeant Gareth Austin crashed into a sign on the road between the southern town of Larnaca and the British base of Dhekelia further southeast. Mr. Austin, who fled the scene, was arrested several hours later at his home in the village of Oroklini and was helping police with inquiries, the Cyprus News Agency said. Police said the motorbike had been ahead of the car which was being driven at excessive speed. Another British soldier in the car was slightly injured, and was treated at Larnaca hospital.

Israeli firemen worked secretly in Somalia radio

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Ten Israeli firemen worked secretly for nine months in Somalia to help build two firestations even though the two countries do not have diplomatic ties, Israel Radio said Saturday. The 10 were sent to Somalia last year by a private firm, Tahuf based in Nazareth, after a U.N. international appeal to build a firestation at the airport in Mogadishu, the radio said. Before they arrived in Somalia the fire-fighting experts trained about 40 Kenyans in Nairobi who also helped in the construction work, which included a second station close to the U.S. embassy in the Somali capital. One of the firemen, Gideon Leb, told how one of the Israelis was slightly wounded by a shell which fell onto the building site. He added he had also been threatened with death by the head of one of the warring Somali factions, but the man was later arrested.

'Tortured' pilot sues Kuwait for damages

LONDON (AFP) — The Kuwaiti government is to defend itself in a British court against allegations it assisted in the torture of one of its own officers after the Gulf war, the Independent reported Saturday.

The unprecedented legal action, to be heard next month, has been brought by Suleiman Al Adani, a former Kuwaiti pilot, who is in hiding in Britain after receiving death threats, said the paper.

British courts have historically ruled that foreign governments are immune from prosecution in Britain, but last year, in a landmark decision, the court of appeal allowed Mr. Adani to serve writs for compensation on Kuwait through the British legal system.

It accepted there was a real risk to his life in taking action through the Kuwaiti courts. Mr. Adani also issued writs against three members of Kuwait's ruling family, said the Independent.

Britain's Foreign Office was asked to serve the writs last summer and the defendants have since appointed lawyers in Britain, added the paper.

Kuwait is understood to be arguing that, under the rules of immunity, it cannot be held liable for acts of torture in its own country, but Al Adani is arguing he was tortured with the knowledge and assistance of the Kuwaiti government.

When the Iraqis invaded Kuwait, Mr. Adani stayed in the country, and was asked to hide a video-tape from the invaders which allegedly depicted one of the most senior members of the ruling family, Sheikh Jabar Al Sabah Al Saud Al Sabah, being intimate with women.

Mr. Adani says the tape was then distributed without his knowledge. After liberation, Mr. Adani claimed the sheikh began a witch-hunt of those responsible for the tape's distribution, and more than 140 Kuwaitis were rounded up, and held without charge.

In May 1991, the sheikh and another member of the ruling family, Sheikh Talal Fahd Al Ahmad Al Sabah, came to Mr. Adani's door with a henchman, it is claimed.

Mr. Adani says he was whipped with guns, forced into a jeep and taken to prison. Under threat of death, he signed a confession, and was released.

Mr. Adani alleges he later went to the sheikh's palace to help him find remaining copies of the tape, and was taken to a room, containing two petrol-soaked mattresses. The sheikh lit a match, leaving him in the room to suffer 25 per cent burns before the fire was put out.

The sheikh allegedly then said he would shoot Mr. Adani, but the officer replied that his father knew where he was and was expecting him home.

Mr. Adani was taken to a hospital and warned not to tell anyone. His father took him to London, where he has been ever since.

Keith Carmichael of the Redress Trust, which has been helping Mr. Adani prepare the case, said: "Our hope is that this case will go to court but that Kuwait will recognise its responsibility and compensate him."

He should not have to endure more pain and suffering from a protracted legal process."

Stung by Palestinian attacks, Israel brings in foreign workers

By Dan Perry
The Associated Press

TEL AVIV — Construction worker Ion Tofei, attracted by wages far higher than in his native Romania, arrived in Israel this week to take over the kind of job until recently held by Palestinians.

The 52-year-old welder is among tens of thousands of foreign labourers streaming to the Jewish state to replace Palestinians as part of Israel's emerging separation from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The foreigners are picking fruit at farms in central Israel, building interchanges on the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway, and even handling bags at the airport.

"If Palestinians can find jobs in their own areas, that is more natural and better," said government spokesman Uri Dromi Monday. "The less we are together the better."

Aimed at preventing further attacks, the separation policy is a sharp departure from the initial hopes for peaceful economic integration that arose when the

Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) accord was signed in September 1993.

It is also worsening an already desperate situation in the Palestinian areas, still heavily dependent on the income from jobs in Israel.

But a wave of bombings against Israelis by opponents of the peace process has convinced many Israelis that the best option for the moment is divorce. Since October, 56 Israelis have died in such attacks.

After the most recent attacks, a suicide bombing that killed 21 Israelis in central Israel on Jan. 22, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin sealed off the Palestinian areas and appointed officials to come up with a plan for making the separation permanent.

In talks with the Israelis, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has noted that the growing economic despair is feeding support for the extremists and filling their ranks.

"We are really worried about this phenomenon," said Shahar Saad, head of the General Federation of Labour Unions in the West Bank. "Once the Palestinian workers lose their jobs in Israel... they cannot find jobs in the West Bank and Gaza."

He said unemployment in the West Bank, where about one million Palestinians live, rose to 51 per cent since the closure.

Mr. Dromi said foreign investment and joint Israeli-Arab industrial parks will eventually provide the Palestinians with work. But the foreign aid is coming in slowly, and Mr. Dromi admitted the industrial parks are at least two years away.

Meanwhile, Palestinians hopes that peace will bring a measure of prosperity are fading away.

Construction worker Mohammad Othman from the West Bank village of Yata said he has earned only 220 shekels (\$73) from odd jobs in the month since the closure.

"I do not want to steal, I do not want beg," said Oth-

man, 43, who added he is feeding his 13-member family on a diet of lentils and bread. "I am in despair."

Israel, meanwhile, appears to be breaking free of the dependence on Palestinian labour, which had gradually built up over 28 years of occupation.

The Israeli daily Haaretz reported this week that fluctuations in the number of Palestinian workers would no longer affect Israeli prices. Housing prices went up by one-third last year, in part because of frequent closures of the West Bank and Gaza.

"Those who suffer are the Palestinian workers and not the employers," said Yaron Angel, who has replaced most of the West Bankers in his Jerusalem bakery with Arabs from Jerusalem who are not restricted by the closure. "We can manage without them."

As the numbers of foreign workers in Israel grew to 70,000 this month, the government said it will reissue permits to 15,000 Palestinians. But only about 1,000

have returned to work so far. "For me it is great," said Mr. Tofei, sharing a lunch of bread and tapwater with a Romanian colleague at his construction site.

He said the \$600 he expects to save each month are five times what he earned in Romania and represent his only hope of buying a home for his wife and two children in his hometown of Suceava in northern Romania.

"The foreign workers are OK, but they are slower than the Palestinians, and they get drunk more often," said Mr. Tofei's foreman, who would not give his name. He sniffed the bottle, saying he had caught another group drinking vodka on the job.

Some Israeli officials are warning that the influx of foreigners could create yet another social problem in Israel.

Labour Minister Ora Namir has warned against repeating the experience of Germany, where millions of Turkish workers brought in since the 1960s have remained.

Lawmaker Avraham Poraz from the liberal Meretz Party noted the plight of about 250 Romanian workers and 50 Thais stranded in a shanty town beside a construction site near Tel Aviv since their employer went bankrupt and disappeared with their passports in December.

At the site Monday, many of the workers, who have been subsisting largely on handouts and their meager savings, said they regretted coming.

"The Israelis treat us like animals," said Grigori Matiesi, a 47-year-old from Romania. "We live here eight to a room, without electricity or heating. No one cares about us. It's inhuman."

Doliz Peretz, a spokeswoman for the Histadrut Labour Federation, said the union was trying to help resolve such problems with legal aid and, in some cases, food handouts.

"The Histadrut is disgusted by the treatment of the foreign workers by the construction companies," she said.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 19, Aqaba 25 Humidity
readings: Amman 25 per cent,
Aqaba 25 per cent.

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775212
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 660800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 661176
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 623101
Complaints 871111
Telephone Information 121
(directory assistance)
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre 81381/332
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 642816
Akish Maternity, J. Amn 6424412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 6641714
Palestine, Shmeisani 669131
Shmeisani Hospital 845845
University Hospital 6672779
Al-Muasher Hospital 66612737
The Islamic, Abdali 6641646
Al-Ahli, Abdali 7771013
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 7771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 7751126
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 66224050
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA: Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990390
DRBID: Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272775
Ibn Al-Nafes Hospital (02)347100
AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital (02)341111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:30 Bangkok (RJ)
07:45 Agaba (RJ)
08:35 Jeddah (RJ)
08:45 Damascus (RJ)
09:05 Larnaca (RJ)
09:25 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
10:15 Doha, Bahrain, (RJ)
10:15 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:20 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
17:35 London (RJ)
18:10 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
18:40 Athens (RJ)
19:35 Vienna (RJ)
20:00 Frankfurt (RJ)
20:00 Rome (RJ)
23:45 Agaba (RJ)
02:30 Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

12:35 Manama (GF)
14:25 Moscow (SU)
20:05 Beirut (ME)
22:55 Istanbul (TK)
01:10 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:30 Agaba (RJ)
06:25 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
09:25 Frankfurt (RJ)
10:15 Jeddah (RJ)
11:00 Rome (RJ)
11:25 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
11:50 Athens (RJ)
20:15 Cairo (MS)
20:45 Jeddah (RJ)
20:45 New Delhi (RJ)
20:45 Damascus (RJ)
20:45 Agaba (RJ)
21:25 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
21:45 Doha, Bahrain, (RJ)
22:30 Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)
22:30 Bangkok (RJ)
22:45 Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

07:25 Rome (AZ)
13:30 Doha, Moscow (GF)
16:05 Moscow (SU)
21:00 Cairo (MS)
02:30 Amsterdam (KL)

RIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 700/400
Banana 680
Banana (Mukammal) 620
Cabbage 120/60
Carrot 180/80
Cauliflower 140/40
Cucumbers (large) 140/100
Cucumbers (small) 300/200
Eggplant 170/100
Garlic 1100/600
Green Beans 480/400
Lemon 280/200
Marrow (large) 120/100
Marrow (small) 250/150
Onion (green) 270/150
Onion (dry) 320/200
Orange 400/300
Pepper (hot) 800/600
Pepper (sweet) 620/420
Potato 140/100
Radish 330/200
Spinach 130/70
String Beans 850/500
Tomato 220/130

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:00 Cocottes Minutes
17:30 Que Le Mielleur Gagne
18:00 Erika 'Al Tout Pour
19:00 News In French
19:15 Ushuaia
20:30 Profiles of the Muslim World
21:00 Erebus "Aftermath"
21:00 Step by Step
21:30 Heartbeat
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature Film: "Top Secret"
23:59 Till We Meet Again

PRAYER TIMES

04:46 Fair
06:04 (Sunrise) Dula
11:49 Dhur
15:03 'Asr
17:33 Maghreb
18:51 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Smeith, Tel. 810740
Jews' Synagogue of God Church, Tel.
637785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624990
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661371

Terrace Church Tel: 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel.
623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel.
623541
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.
775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel.
662526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.
824328
German-speaking Evangelical Co-
gregation Tel. 684193
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in
Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department
of Meteorology.

TEMPERATURES

Temperatures are expected to
drop slightly with cloudy to partly
cloudy and winds westerly moder-
ate. In Aqaba, winds will be north-
erly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Foreign ministry team to find premises for office in Gaza

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A Foreign Ministry team heads for the autonomous Gaza Strip on Sunday for a visit primarily aimed at finding suitable premises to locate a Jordanian representative office which will coordinate with the Palestine National Authority (PNA).

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the delegation would be led by Ahmad Al Hisban and will include Ahmad Mbeideen and Saeed Abdul Hameed.

Officials said the PNA had been informed of the visit, and officials from the self-rule authority would be meeting the delegation and assisting it during its stay in the Gaza Strip.

Jordan agreed to open a representative office in the Gaza Strip during talks held between His Majesty King Hussein and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat in Amman in late January.

Those talks also led to the signing of a broad accord on coordination and cooperation

between Jordan and the self-rule authority as well as agreements on sectoral cooperation.

The officials noted that in view of the agreements signed, it was most essential that Jordan maintains an office in the Gaza Strip to closely coordinate with the PLO-led PNA on various technical issues.

It was not immediately clear what status Jordan was planning to give to the proposed office in Gaza, whether it will be named an interests section, a "contact" bureau or a "representative" office.

But, said an official, "whatever the name, the office will fill a vital slot in Jordanian-Palestinian cooperation and act as a key reference point for technical issues related to both sides."

At one point earlier, it was reported that Mr. Mbeideen, who now heads the information section of the foreign ministry, was to head the office in Gaza. But Mr. Mbeideen himself denied the report and said he was not aware of any plans by the ministry.

Foreign Minister Abdul

Karim Kabariti was reportedly planning to visit the Gaza Strip early this month, but a short-notice meeting in Washington on Feb. 12 with his Egyptian, Israeli, Palestinian and American counterparts appeared to have preempted the visit.

The officials said the delegation leaving on Sunday will locate a suitable building to house the Jordanian representative office, and that Mr. Kabariti might visit the Gaza Strip to formally open it.

Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia have either opened similar offices or announced their intention to do so. Several European countries have also established outposts in the Gaza Strip, and some in the West Bank town of Jericho, which also went under Palestinian autonomy in May.

The PLO has requested the Cairo-based general secretariat of the Arab League to consider the possibilities of locating branches of some of its affiliate organisations in the Gaza Strip and Jericho. The precise status of the PLO request was not immediately known.

'Schoolmate says she saw murder victim riding in car with man and 2 women'

By Rana Hussein Special to the Jordan Times

ZARQA CAMP — A 10-year-old girl who was found murdered in Tabarbour Thursday was last seen riding in a blue car with a man and two women, an eyewitness has said.

"I saw Samar (the victim) waving good-bye and smiling to me as the car drove away," the eyewitness, a schoolmate of the victim, told the Jordan Times Saturday.

The body of Samar Hassan Ghouthain was discovered by a shepherd in the Tabarbour area of Amman two days after she was reported missing by her family who live in Zarqa camp.

"Police informed us Friday that they found Samar's body in Amman lying near a pile of rocks, and we learned that she had been sodomised before she was killed," a family member told the Jordan Times Saturday.

According to the victim's relative, Samar, a fifth-grader at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) School in Zarqa, returned home on Wednesday and then went to run some errands for her mother.

"Samar's mother asked

her to go to the girl's aunt's house to get some food.

The aunt gave Samar a sauceman to give to her mother then the child left the house," the family member said. The relative said Samar's schoolmate told the family that she was walking in the street and saw Samar in a dark blue car waving at her, and "Samar was not seen after that."

The relative said that Samar's family had no enemies and knows of no one who owns a dark blue car in the camp.

"Until now we can't believe what had happened to

Samar or that she has died; and we have no idea who would commit such an ugly crime," she said.

Samar, one of seven siblings, comes from a family where both parents are unemployed.

The Zarqa police chief refused to reveal any details and said that the case concerns the Amman police.

Amman Police Chief Brigadier General Adel Arnouti confirmed that the girl's body was found and that investigations were continuing into the crime.

But, he added, "we do not know where the rape or

killing took place, but what is more important to us at the moment is to find the killers."

The police official said that the authorities have no suspect, but added that "there are high hopes of finding him them."

Last year on March 12, Lo'ai Oreiqat, an eight-year-old boy who was also reported missing in Zarqa was found sodomised and brutally murdered near Al Hashemich area four days after his disappearance. A 57-year-old man who was arrested and confessed to committing the crime was executed in July.

'Government to protect Sawt Al Shaab workers'

AMMAN (J.T.) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information Khaled Karaki

Saturday said that the government would protect the rights and interests of workers at Sawt Al Shaab Arabic daily which ceased publication earlier this month.

The publication, whose capital is primarily government-owned, was suspended indefinitely Feb. 13 because of recurrent losses, and the Ministry of Industry and Trade subsequently dissolved the Dar Al Shaab Company board of directors and appointed a new board chaired by Wasef Azar for a one year term.

Speaking at a meeting with the president and members of the board of the Jordan Press Association (JPA) at his office, Dr. Karaki said that the government was keen on protecting the rights and the future of the JPA members

who used to work for the daily.

A JPA source told the Jordan Times that the Ministry of Information emphasised that the 140 workers employed by Sawt Al Shaab will receive their full compensation including their salaries for February. But their fate concerning employment could be determined by the company's general assembly meeting due on Feb. 28.

During a discussion of JPA issues and the rights of journalists, the minister said that the government was careful to ensure and protect the rights and interests of journalists within the rule of law and respect of the majority's views and decisions.

The government is committed to its policy statement presented to Parliament in which it pledged to coordinate and cooperate with the JPA in information, press



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information Khaled Karaki Saturday meets with Jordan Press Association President Suleiman Qudab. Also attending the meeting were other senior ministry officials and JPA members (Petra photo)

and media matters and in promoting the JPA's professional work and secure freedom of the press, said Dr. Karaki.

He lauded the role of the Jordanian media during the democratic transformation process in Jordan.

For his part, JPA President Suleiman Qudab said the association was willing to cooperate with the ministry to ensure freedom of the press and to solve problems facing journalists.

He said the JPA was com-

mitted to defending the rights of all journalists and will seek to guarantee that they remain employed.

The JPA also is determined to do all that it can to deal with those who violate the rules and ethics of the journalism profession and the JPA law. He said that the JPA will pursue efforts with the owners of weekly newspapers to ensure an end to violations of rules.

Discussion that followed covered the future of the workers in Sawt Al Shaab

daily, excesses by some weeklies which follow a pattern of exaggeration in dealing with news about crimes and inaccurate reporting of events.

Several cases have been filed against some newspapers for alleged violations of the Press and Publications Law enacted in 1993.

Ministry Secretary General

Nayef Mouta and Press and Publications Department Director Mohammad Amin were present at the meeting.

Awqaf minister opens 2 exhibitions

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Abbadi Saturday opened an Islamic book exhibition and another exhibition highlighting the achievements and activities of his ministry in religious guidance, haj and the care of mosques.

The two exhibitions, which are to last until the end of the month of Ramadan, are being held at the King Abdullah Mosque in Amman.

Several local publishing

houses are taking part in the exhibitions displaying an array of cultural, Islamic, social and economic books.

Upon opening the exhibitions, Dr. Abbadi said that they aim at promoting reading of religious books and spreading Islamic culture.

According to Dr. Abbadi,

the ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has prepared an integrated plan for investment in awqaf lands with the purpose of raising income for

ministry activities. He said it has submitted investment plans to the Orphans Fund and the Islamic Development Bank in order to secure funds for the implementation of the plan.

The ministry is already building a shopping centre in downtown Amman which is expected to cost JD18 million, said the minister.

He said the ministry attaches great hopes on the 15-storey building project to ensure regular income.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Government to observe Eid starting Thursday

AMMAN (Petra) — All government departments and public institutions will be closed Thursday through Sunday (March 2 to 5) in celebration of the Eid Al Fitr marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan, according to an official statement issued by the prime minister's office Saturday. Offices will resume regular work on Monday March 6. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Saturday announced that it was organising a major religious celebration Sunday, Feb. 26, at the King Abdullah Mosque to celebrate Lailat Al Qadr which falls three days before the Eid Al Fitr.

Kabariti invited to Qatar

AMMAN (Petra) — Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti has received an invitation from his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassem Ben Jaber Al Thani to visit Qatar. The invitation was conveyed to Mr. Kabariti by Qatar's Ambassador to Jordan Nasser Abdul Aziz Al Nasser.

Ministry prepares for Women's Day

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Social Development Salwa Damen-Masri has instructed ministry departments to organise celebrations marking Women's Day which falls on March 8. In a circular to ministry departments, Mrs. Damen-Masri said that celebrations should highlight Jordanian women's contributions to socio-economic development and construction in Jordan.

Health minister returns from Europe

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Health Aref Batayneh returned to Amman Saturday after representing Jordan at meetings held in the United Kingdom, France and Ireland dealing with health and development. Dr. Batayneh represented His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan at a health experts meeting held on Feb. 17 in Paris.

S. Arabian dies in Azraq road accident

AMMAN (Petra) — Abdullah Duseri, a Saudi Arabian national, died Saturday when a pick-up truck he was riding in collided with a bus on the Azraq highway. The driver of the pick-up truck, Suleiman Duseri, and another passenger, Salem Duseri, also Saudi nationals were injured in the accident.

Weather bureau predicts unstable conditions

AMMAN (Petra) — The Weather Bureau Saturday said that unstable weather conditions are expected to affect Jordan Sunday. It said clouds will appear, and a noticeable drop in temperatures was expected.

Libya orders JD3.9m in Jordanian products

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Industry and Trade Saturday said that Libyan importers have placed import orders worth JD3.9 million for Jordanian garments and shoes. It said that its office in Tripoli was facilitating arrangements for the exports noting that Jordanian firms have recently participated in a Libyan trade fair.

CAA chief heads for talks in Manila

AMMAN (Petra) — Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Director General Ahmad Jweiber Saturday left for Manila at the head of a delegation on a several day visit to the Philippines. The delegation will meet with officials at the Philippine Civil Aviation Authority to discuss air transport matters.

Nursing specialists return from U.S.

AMMAN (J.T.) — The first group of nurses sent to Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. to acquire training in the treatment of cancer patients has returned to Amman. The nurses, who obtained master degrees in nursing, are to be employed at Al Amal Cancer Centre near the University of Jordan which is expected to become operative in four months.

'95 CSC job applications number 20,875

AMMAN (Petra) — The Civil Service Commission (CSC) Saturday said that last year it received 20,875 applications from people seeking jobs in government departments. Of these, it said, 9,075 were holders of university degrees. Until the end of last year the CSC had received a total of 110,890 applications for work.

JBA publishes book on GATT

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Businessmen's Association (JBA) Saturday issued a book entitled "Focus on the GATT Treaty," by researcher Abdul Halim Muheisen. The book, the eighth in a series of JBA publications focusing on trade and business, sheds light on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and what it means for Jordan.

Jordan to award contract to get water from Israel

By Rana Sabbagh Reuter

AMMAN — The government said on Saturday it had awarded a \$5-million contract for a pipeline to carry up to 30 million cubic metres of water from northern Israel in accordance with the terms of the peace treaty.

Minister of Water and Irrigation Saleh Irshaidat told Reuters the 3.5-kilometre steel pipeline would be built by a local firm and be operational by May 15.

The pipeline will take water from Lake Tiberias into the 110-kilometre long King Abdullah Canal irrigating the Jordan Valley, and one-third of it will be inside Israel.

Under the Oct. 26 peace treaty with Israel, Jordan could get over 150 million cubic metres of water from

various sources if several dams and desalination plants are built, according to Jordanian officials.

The 30-million cubic metres of water to be carried by the pipeline includes 20 million cubic metres stored in Lake Tiberias. It would be pumped between May 15 and Oct. 15, and Israel would provide the rest, floodwater, in winter.

Mr. Irshaidat said the European Union had appointed an Irish consultancy to set engineering terms of references for possible dams on the Jordan River.

He said the ministry also had short-listed four consortiums of local and international engineering firms to do a feasibility study on a dam to regulate Yarmouk River waters entering the King Abdullah Canal.

"We expect the study contract to be awarded

sometime next week," he said.

Mr. Irshaidat said the proposed \$7 million dam would yield up to 70 million cubic metres of water a year by better diversion. Israel will also get some 25 million cubic metres of water. A dam could be operating by early 1996.

He said a local consultancy, aided by the Paris-based OTH engineering firm, had completed preliminary studies to develop the barren coast of the Dead Sea.

The multi-million dollar plan includes both infrastructure and projects such as spa hotels to use the mineral-rich water for sports and to treat skin diseases.

A master plan for 60 square kilometres is to be shown to local and foreign investors. Israeli developments on its side of the sea attract thousands of tourists.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

FILM

★ Film entitled "The Learning Tree" at the American Center at 2:30 p.m.

runs at the Bani Hamida House, Jabal Amman (Tel. 658696).

PLAYS

★ Play (in Arabic) entitled "You Are Not Yourself" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.

★ Exhibition of oil paintings by Sobah Ibrahim at Al Bayraq Art Gallery, Sports City Intersection (Tel. 688701).

★ Play (in Arabic) entitled "The Mask" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:30 p.m.

★ Exhibition of handicrafts by Hammig Knaymjan at the Royal Cultural Centre.

POETRY FESTIVAL

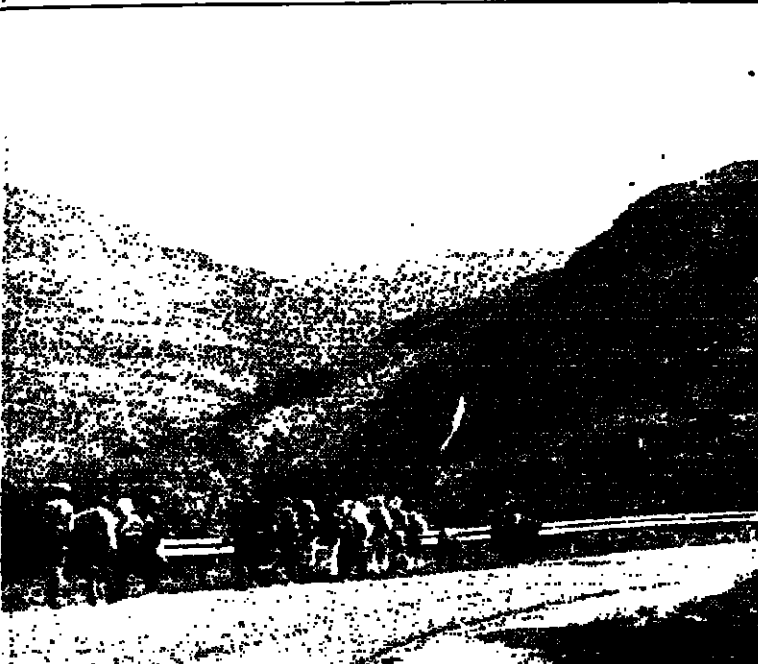
★ Poetry festival with the participation of Dr. Walid Sayf and Dr. Izzuddin Mansurah at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.

★ "Young America" exhibit (with photographs featuring Americans of all ages) at the American Centre.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Display of Bani Hamida new designs of

★ Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre.



Interfaith pilgrims pray and walk for peace through Jordan part of mission (Photos by Peter, an interfaith pilgrim)



Masked gunmen kill 20 Shi'ites in attacks on Karachi mosques

KARACHI (R) — Masked gunmen killed 20 worshippers in dawn assaults on two Shi'ite Muslim mosques in Pakistan's southern city of Karachi Saturday, police said.

The attacks, among the bloodiest in a series of tit-for-tat killings between militant Sunni and Shi'ite factions, raised fears of further violence in Karachi, where 153 people have died this month in ethnic and sectarian unrest.

Javed Iqbal, deputy inspector general of Karachi police, told a news conference that the identity of the assailants

was not yet known and police had made no arrests.

He said gunmen fired Kalashnikov assault rifles at people praying at a Shi'ite place of worship, known as an Imambarah, in the east Karachi district of Pib Colony, at about 6.10 a.m. (0110 GMT) before beginning their dawn-to-dusk Ramadan fast.

Three worshippers died on the spot and three in hospital. Twenty minutes later, three armed men burst into the Mehfil-i-Martaza Imambarah off Shahid-I-Millat Road, killing six worshippers instantly. Eight died later of their wounds. One survived,

but was in serious condition, Mr. Iqbal said.

"We heard gunshots and came out of the house to see people running out of the mosque and driving away in a white car," Ghulam Ali, who lives nearby, told Reuters at the scene.

"We went inside and saw people lying in a pool of blood. Some of the wounded were crying and weeping," he said.

Among the dead was the imam, or prayer leader, Maulvi Ayub Sabri, and three watchmen, one of whom had been forced from the entrance of the compound into the mosque at gunpoint.

Iqbal said a police vehicle had been guarding the Imambarah all night but had left the area minutes before the attack.

Hassan Turabi, secretary-general of the militant Shi'ite Tehrik-i-Jafria Pakistan (TJP), accused Sunni militants of carrying out the killings with the help of the government.

"Sunni militants are definitely to blame, but the government cannot be pardoned for its involvement," he told Reuters.

The activists of Shi'ite groups and their main Sunni rivals, the Sipah-I-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), have been the target of many gun and bomb attacks in Karachi and elsewhere.

There were no immediate claims of responsibility and SSP officials could not be reached for comment.

Mohammad Salim Khan, the government-appointed commissioner of Karachi, told the news conference that peace committees had been set up in the city to try to defuse sectarian tension.

The attacks followed a day of protests by Islamic mili-

itants across Pakistan Friday against a Lahore High Court decision to acquit two Christians sentenced to hang for blasphemy.

Police in Lahore said Friday they had used teargas and batons to quell Sunni and Shi'ite demonstrators and had arrested at least 150 people. A dozen people were wounded, including a policeman stabbed during a Shi'ite-led protest.

Ethnic, sectarian and political violence killed at least 800 people last year in Karachi, a metropolis of 12 million people.

Tension between Sunnis and minority Shi'ites has mounted in the current Muslim fasting month of Ramadan in the bustling port city, where gunmen shot dead six people Friday.

Turabi said the sectarian violence was due to a plot by the United States, with the complicity of the Pakistani government, to crush Muslims by setting them against each other.

"We will fight the government of Pakistan and the United States, who are behind all these killings, instead of turning our guns on our Sunni brothers," he said.

Shi'ites make up an estimated 15 per cent of Pakistan's mainly Sunni population of around 125 million.

A spokesman for the radical Shi'ite group Sipah-I-Mohammad accused the SSP of carrying out the mosque killings and blamed the government for igniting sectarian strife.

"You can expect retaliation from the Shi'ite side soon," said the spokesman, who asked not to be named.

Mr. Iqbal said armed policemen had been posted at selected mosques in sensitive areas of Karachi. "Police will keep a round-the-clock vigil," he said.



Young activists belonging to Islamic religious parties chant slogans against the government of Pakistan; premier Benazir Bhutto outside the High Court building, Lahore High Court is reviewing the blasphemy case against Christian youths Salman Masih and Rahmat Masih, who were sentenced to hang by a lower court (AFP photo)

Foot sues paper over spying claim

LONDON (AP) — Michael Foot is suing Rupert Murdoch and two of his Sunday newspapers for libel over a report the KGB regarded the former Labour Party leader as an important contact in the 1960s.

The report in the Sunday Times and News of the World last Sunday also suggested that the politician took money from KGB agents to finance his left-wing newspaper.

"These allegations... accuse him of treachery to his country and have been made even though the Sunday Times had every reason to believe they were untrue," David Price, Mr. Foot's lawyer, said Friday.

Mr. Foot, he said, "holds Mr. Murdoch personally responsible for this McCarthyite smear..."

"Because of the gravity of

these lies, Mr. Foot has decided to bring Rupert Murdoch before the jury."

Mr. Foot, 81, who led Labour in opposition to the governing Conservatives from 1980 to 1983, has called the allegations "a big lie."

"As far as I know I have never met or seen a KGB agent in my life," he told another national newspaper.

Sunday Times editor John Witherow said Friday that the newspaper will "vigorously defend" the libel action.

In a statement, he said the newspaper had never alleged Mr. Foot was a spy, but that the KGB had regarded him, among others, as an "agent of influence."

The Sunday Times based its report on interviews with Oleg Gordievsky, a KGB colonel who was also secretly working for British intelli-

gence, and six other former KGB officers.

Col. Gordievsky, who defected to Britain in 1985, told the news agency Press Association this week that the Sunday Times story was entirely correct.

But in an interview with BBC Radio Saturday, Mikhail Lyubimov, a retired KGB colonel alleged to have recruited Mr. Foot, said Col. Gordievsky "is telling half truths."

Col. Lyubimov said agents often briefed their controllers in Moscow to boost their own careers by inventing informants.

In a radio interview from Moscow this week, another of the Sunday Times' sources, former KGB agent Viktor Kubyshkin, said the newspaper took his remarks out of context.

Defiant Mrs. Mandela flies to Burkina Faso

OUAGADOUGOU (R) — A defiant Winnie Mandela flew into Burkina Faso to attend an African Film Festival as South Africa's deputy minister of culture, despite an order from President Nelson Mandela to cancel the trip.

Mrs. Mandela, the estranged wife of the South African president, made no comment to reporters on the latest controversy to strike her when she arrived Friday night.

She was looking forward to the Pan African Film Festival which opened Saturday and was struck by the poverty of West Africa compared to South Africa.

"It's depressing to see that in some ways Africa is still how it was 30 years ago," she told reporters on the plane. Earlier Friday Mrs. Mandela, South Africa's deputy minister of arts, culture, science and technology, met Ivory Coast's Culture Minister Bernard Zadi Zaurou, who gave her a sculpture repre-

senting an African woman, bolts of colourful woven cloth, and a pair of traditional chiefs' sandals.

She also held talks with African Development Bank President Babacar Ndiaye.

South African presidential spokesman Parks Mankahlana said Thursday that Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, on President Mandela's instructions, had told Mrs. Mandela to cancel the trip.

"The deputy minister subsequently wrote to the president explaining why it was important to proceed with the trip. The deputy minister departed, as scheduled, before the consultation on her resubmitted request could be completed," he said.

Mr. Mankahlana told Reuters later that government rules required a minister to have the president's permission for any trip out of the country. "Mrs. Mandela did not have that permission when she left," he said.

But a statement issued by Mrs. Mandela's office Thurs-

day night said she was visiting west Africa in her official capacity.

Mrs. Mandela was reported Saturday to be planning to cut short the unauthorized visit to west Africa.

The Citizen newspaper of Johannesburg quoted her private secretary Alan Reynolds as saying Mrs. Mandela would return early but not before attending a meeting in Ghana with President Jerry Rawlings and west African culture ministers.

The paper quoted Mr. Reynolds as saying the meeting would end on Tuesday. Mrs. Mandela's trip was originally due to last two weeks.

Mr. Mankahlana said from Cape Town Saturday he did not know if Mrs. Mandela was planning to return early.

Asked if there was any discussion of removing her from her post as deputy minister of arts, culture, science and technology, Mr. Mankahlana said: "I don't know."

Cuba slams tough U.S. embargo proposal

HAVANA (R) — A senior Cuban official slammed proposed legislation to toughen the longstanding U.S. embargo, saying nothing Washington did would make Havana change course.

Cuba would never go back to being dominated by the United States, National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcon told a special parliamentary session marking

the 100th anniversary of the start of Cuba's War of Independence against Spain.

Mr. Alarcon, a former foreign minister, furiously attacked the U.S. bill's key sponsor, Senate Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Jesse Helms.

"He's a personality of old fascist, racist lineage," said Mr. Alarcon, who lived for years in the United States as

Cuba's ambassador to the United Nations and who has headed Cuba's side at a recent series of talks with Washington on immigration issues.

"Whatever they do in Washington, we will continue on our path, because we are doing the right thing," said Mr. Alarcon in a speech that traced U.S. interference in Cuban affairs

Simpson witness in hiding after judge orders testimony

LOS ANGELES (R) — A housekeeper who may be able to provide O.J. Simpson with an alibi on the night of the murder of the football great's ex-wife was in hiding Saturday after fearfully promising not to flee the country before testifying Monday.

Following a day filled with dizzying legal twists and turns, Judge Lance Ito late Friday ordered Rosa Lopez to delay plans to leave for her native El Salvador and instead take the stand as a defense witness.

Ms. Lopez, who had expressed fear for her life and complained of harassment by the news media, pleaded with Judge Ito to find her place to stay where she would not be pursued by camera crews, and the judge vowed to do his best.

"And I'll do my best for you, your honour," Ms. Lopez said through a Spanish-language interpreter before slipping out of sight with her lawyer.

In a rare legal manoeuvre, Judge Ito will give Simpson's "dream team" of defense attorneys a chance to interrupt the prosecution's case against Simpson and present early testimony that they hope will help exonerate the former football great.

Defense attorneys say Ms.

Lopez — who worked as a live-in maid for Simpson's next-door neighbour — will testify that she saw his white Ford Bronco parked at this estate at the time prosecutors claim Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ron Goldman were being stabbed to death outside her house.

During Friday's grueling, all-day court session, Ms. Lopez — dressed in a purple jumpsuit — said she wanted to leave for her homeland Saturday because her life had been ruined by the media glare, she had lost her job and had become estranged from her daughter. She has lived in Los Angeles for 27 years.

"I want to leave. All these reporters are destroying my life," she said as she wiped tears from her eyes. "I don't go out anymore. I'm afraid of so many things."

Alarmed at the prospect of losing Ms. Lopez forever, defense attorneys asked that she be allowed to testify immediately.

But prosecutors insisted that Ms. Lopez was bluffing. With the jury absent from the courtroom, she was subjected to withering cross-examination in which she was contradicted herself again and again and raised doubts about her credibility.

Among other things, she at first said she had made reservations to fly to El Salvador Saturday night but then, when prosecutor Christopher Darden said the airline had no seat booked for her, admitted that she had lied.

She said she had immediate fears for her safety and planned to leave the United States for good but then was confronted with evidence that she had booked a round-trip ticket and was not due to leave until sometime in March.

Even Judge Ito seemed struck by the inconsistencies in Ms. Lopez' testimony, commenting at one point to Mr. Darden: "It is a contradictory record. You're right about that."

But Judge Ito ultimately decided that the risk was simply too high that Ms. Lopez would not show up when called to testify perhaps months later when the defence starts presenting its case.

As the court session dragged into the evening hours, he first ordered both sides to prepare to immediately question her on videotape. Minutes later, Judge Ito reversed himself and ordered sheriff's deputies to bring the jury — which had been given the day off — to hear testimony that could last until

midnight.

Then, when prosecutor Marcia Clark reminded him that she had two small children to attend to, Judge Ito said sheepishly, "I plain forgot," and changed course once again, ordering Ms. Lopez to return to court Monday to testify.

Telling Ms. Lopez he could have her jailed if she tried to flee before then, Judge Ito asked: "You promise me that you will obey my order to return?"

"Yes," Ms. Lopez responded but she added, "I don't want any reporters at the hotel."

By then, the jurors had already arrived at the courthouse, the normally immaculate panelists now dressed mostly in blue jeans and sweat suits. Judge Ito called them for a brief explanation and apology. "This is going to be an unusual trial," he told them.

Defence Attorney Joanne Cochran told jurors in his opening statement that Ms. Lopez would be a crucial alibi witness, but legal experts said she is now vulnerable to scathing attack by the prosecution.

"The defence is really throwing the dice with Rosa Lopez," Los Angeles defence attorney Jay Jaffe told KCBS Television.

Los Angeles defence attorney Jay Jaffe told KCBS Television.

British teenage runaway missing in Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — A 14-year-old British boy is missing in Malaysia after he ran away from home, paying his way with his father's credit card, the British High Commission said Saturday.

Peter Kerry of London pilfered his father's credit card to pay for the 8,000-mile (13,000-kilometre) journey but said in a telephone call to his parents he was now broke and stranded. The British High Commission said they had no word of the boy or fresh leads about his current whereabouts.

"We're actively pursuing all possibilities to try and find him and have been doing so since last night (Friday)," the duty officer at the British High Commission said. A spokesman at National Police Headquarters in Kuala Lumpur said Saturday they have had no report of the incident and have not yet launched a search. "So far, no one has filed a missing person's report," Kerry was last sighted at a hotel in Johor Baru, a port city on the Singapore border at the crossroads of the Malacca Straits.

"We don't know how he is, or where he is at the moment... We are very, very worried and desperate to know where he is," his mother Pat Kerry told Reuters in London. "We are not angry with him — we just want him back. I can't wait for him to come home and to give him a big hug." Peter, who has often gone missing after being banned from going to a soccer match with his father, younger brother and sister. His father John, 59, said Peter was sulking after being scolded for leaving the family's video collection in a mess. Peter called home Thursday night to tell his parents he was in Malaysia. He said he had run out of money and had been refused permission to stay at the Puteri Pan Pacific Hotel.

The hotel's general manager, Tom Mueller, said the hotel's credit office refused to accept Kerry's credit card, but allowed him to call home. "And then he wandered off."

Ingmar Bergman ordered out of writing studio

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Perhaps they could settle this with a game of chess. Neighbours of film director Ingmar Bergman want him to give up the rented one-room apartment where he wrote The Seventh Seal. "There are young people who need this apartment more than Bergman does," Joakim Gronwall, the owner's legal representative, said. Used only occasionally by Bergman as a writing studio, the room is empty most of the time. But Bergman, 76, is not about to give up the apartment that he has had for 45 years in the fashionable Ostermalm district. He wrote some of his biggest films there, including Fanny and Alexander and The Seventh Seal, in which a knight played by Max Von Sydow has to win a chess game with death to save himself. In a letter to the owners, disclosed Friday by the newspaper Expressen, Bergman wrote: "I do not under any circumstances accept being thrown out." He has appealed the notice of eviction he received in December. Mr. Gronwall said a hearing was scheduled for April.

No indictment against U.S. TV star in sex case

SOMERVILLE, New Jersey (AP) — Authorities decided not to charge American television star Kelsey Grammer after hearing a judge's allegation that he had sex with her when she was 15. Somerset County Prosecutor Nicholas I. Bissell Jr., said there will be no further proceedings on the matter in his New Jersey county. Grammer gained fame as psychiatrist on the long-running show Cheers. He went on to star as the same character in Frasier. He has maintained that the girl's family was after his money.

In a statement, Grammer said, "I have said from the outset that there was no basis for the allegations made against me. Today, after examining the facts, a New Jersey grand jury came to the same conclusion." Mr. Bissell said a grand jury met Thursday and considered all the evidence. The girl was baby-sitting for Grammer's 9-year-old daughter in a New Jersey hotel when she claims the two first had sex in 1993.

Mexico probe reveals 2 gunmen killed presidential candidate Colosio

MEXICO CITY (R) — Police have arrested a second suspected gunman in the assassination last year of ruling party presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio, Mexico's attorney general said Friday.

The announcement, accompanied by charges that vital evidence in the case has been tampered with, left in ruins the theory put forward by investigators under the previous Mexican government that Mr. Colosio was shot by a lone assassin.

The second gunman, identified as Othon Cortes Vazquez, was detained Friday and is being questioned by police, Attorney General Antonio Lozano told a news conference.

"The hypothesis of the single assassin is not sustainable," Mr. Lozano said, adding that eyewitnesses and video recordings of the killing had "fully identified" Mr. Cortes as the second gunman.

News reports said Mr. Cortes, 38, worked at the Tijuana City Airport, but

officials at the attorney general's office declined to give any details about his identity.

Radio station Radio Red said Mr. Cortes appears only once in a record of the case published last year by a previous investigator, where he is named simply as a witness and a ruling party supporter.

"The murder... was the result of the action of various individuals," Mr. Lozano said. A newly discovered video recording "clearly shows collusion between several people."

Although he did not name any other suspects, three members of Colosio's security detail have been held for months on suspicion of aiding and abetting in the murder.

Colosio, the presidential candidate of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), was shot dead last March 23 at the end of a campaign rally in the northern city of Tijuana, just over the border from San Diego, California.

Colosio, who as PRI candidate was virtually certain to

have become Mexican president, died after being shot once in the head and once in the abdomen.

A 27-year-old mechanic, Mario Aburto Martinez, was arrested at the scene and confessed to the shooting. Mr. Aburto, who claimed to have acted alone, was sentenced to 45 years in prison last December.

Mr. Lozano said Aburto fired the shot to Colosio's head shortly before Mr. Cortes shot him in the abdomen.

Mr. Lozano said the original police investigation of the killing was full of "irregularities" and that "there is no doubt that the scene of the crime was manipulated."

He said that a lead bullet found in a pool of Colosio's blood at the scene of the crime had been "sown" there and that the scene had been "set up."

Ballistics tests had shown that any bullet passing through Colosio's body could not have ended up in the position where it was found, he said.

Cyclone continues to hammer Australia

PERTH (R) — Rescue officials were searching for eight fishermen missing after a cyclone generating winds of up to 250 kilometres an hour hammered Australia's north-west coast Saturday and began moving inland.

Police said two boats carrying six fishermen had been located, but one boat with three passengers and another with five were still missing after the fury of cyclone Bobby moved in from the Indian Ocean early Saturday.

"It could be that their communications systems are damaged or their boats have capsized — we just don't know," Western Australian State Emergency Service duty officer Stuart Cowie told Reuters.

Residents of the fishing village of Onslow, about 1,400 kilometres north of Perth, bore the brunt of the storm. Bobby hit the town early Saturday, tearing the roofs from about 20 homes, uprooting trees and cutting power and water supplies.

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Defense attorneys say Ms.

Gramm launches U.S. presidential bid

COLLEGE STATION, Texas (R) — Texas Senator Phil Gramm opened the 1996 U.S. presidential campaign Friday, formally declaring his candidacy for the Republican nomination with conservative pledges of less government and lower taxes.

With a brass band playing and flags flying, Sen. Gramm, 52, made his announcement on a sunny, breezy day on the campus of Texas A&M University, where he spent 13 years as an economics professor before entering politics in 1978.

"With a love for America and a resolve to make her right again, I today declare myself a candidate for president of the United States," Sen. Gramm said in his broad Texas drawl. "I want to cut government spending and cut taxes to let families keep more of their own money to invest in... their own future."

"In the lives of families and business and even the lives of great nations, there are critical moments when you must either face up to your problems or be overwhelmed by them. Now is such a moment for America," added Sen. Gramm, the first person, Republican or Democrat, to enter the 1996 race.

Democratic President Bill Clinton has said he plans to seek re-election but has made no formal declaration for the November 1996 ballot.

Although Mr. Clinton's approval ratings have climbed into the 50 per cent range, he is seen as vulnerable following last November's elections when Republicans grabbed full control of Congress for the first time in 40 years.

Sen. Gramm's declaration was little more than a formality since the Texas senator has been actively campaigning for months and planning his assault on the White House for at least five years, but it marks a new phase in the 1996 campaign.

Former Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander will follow him into the Republican field with an announcement Tuesday. Senate Republican leader Bob Dole, the early frontrunner for the nomination, has scheduled his official declaration for April 10 in Kansas. Several other prospective candidates are still trying to decide whether to run.

Sen. Gramm was introduced Friday by Dickie Flatt, a printer from Mexia, Texas, often cited by Sen. Gramm as the sort of common man he is trying to help.

Sen. Gramm said he would examine every federal programme and ask if it was worth taking tax money from people like Flatt to pay for them. "And let me tell you something: There are not a lot of programmes that will stand

up to the test," he declared. Absent from Sen. Gramm's speech was any mention of the kind of social issues close to the hearts of many Christian Evangelicals, a growing power in the Republican Party. He did not utter the words "abortion" or "school prayer."

From Texas, long his home, Sen. Gramm was flying to his birthplace of Columbus, Ga., where he was to speak in front of the elementary school where he failed the third grade and receive the endorsement of all the state's Republican members of Congress except House Speaker Newt Gingrich.

Mr. Gingrich is remaining neutral in the Republican race.

Gen. Gramm, a former Democrat who switched parties in 1983, is a balding, studious man with strong conservative convictions, iron determination but little charisma. But no one doubts his organisational strength.

He showed it off with a fundraising gala that collected a record \$4.1 million in Dallas Thursday.

Analysts estimate he will soon have about \$12 million, an incredible sum so early in the race and far more than any rival in a campaign where ability to travel, hire support staff and buy television advertising time will be crucial.



A woman pushes a pram containing some of her belongings on a street of Grozny, ruined and deserted. The situation in Grozny remains calm (AFP photo)

Chechens defend deserted ruin of a town

ARGUN, Russia (R) — A lone Chechen cyclist pedals furiously along devastated Lenin Street in Argun as Russian machine-gun bullets explode behind him.

He escapes down an alley, chased by the shriek of gas from a ruptured high-

pressure line. Helicopters beat the air ominously across the Argun River, resupplying Russian troops positioned for an all-out assault on this strategic town 19 kilometers east of the Chechen capital Grozny. With Grozny finally encir-

led after two months of fighting, the Russians need Argun to reach Gudermes, a vital junction on the rail line linking Moscow to oil-rich Azerbaijan.

Most civilians have abandoned Argun, fleeing south to join over 200,000 others displaced by Russia's bid to crush tiny Chechnya's bid for independence.

Local military officials say only a few hundred of Argun's pre-war population of 11,000 are still here. Most live underground to escape Russian shells and sniper fire.

Only Chechen fighters roam the streets, waiting for a show-down potentially as disastrous as the battle for Grozny, where Russian troops finally triumphed with huge losses to both sides.

"The Russians think we have a lot of professional fighters in this town but some of our men only began using Kalashnikovs (automatic rifles) a few days ago," said Akhmed, a Chechen fighter guiding reporters through the shell-blasted town.

"Look at us, we're the Chechen special forces," jokes one of Akhmed's lightly-armed comrades heading off to the front.

Grim determination rather than bravado typifies the men defending Argun, many of whom fought in Grozny and know what they are up against here.

Chechens with Kalashnikovs and shoulder-fired grenade launchers battled Russian tanks for weeks in the narrow streets of Grozny

only to be driven out in the end by incessant shelling and aerial bombardment.

Having learned a lesson in Grozny, the Russians have avoided direct infantry contact with the Chechens in Argun for nearly two weeks — preferring instead to pound the town with mortar, tank and artillery fire.

The level of destruction increases as Akhmed's walking tour moves reporters closer to Argun River, which snakes north and west of the town. Roofless, windowless houses are everywhere in Argun, but all the buildings on the northern edge of town have been destroyed.

Some narrow lanes near the front are virtually impassable even on foot — choked by downed trees, power lines and the rubble of collapsed houses.

Walls left standing are pitted by shrapnel and sniper fire, which occasionally rips past from Russian positions only 300 metres away across the river.

Chechen defenders are dug into cellars and reinforced timber bunkers along the way, watching and waiting for the Russian assault they expect any day.

"It's very simple, they have more men and better weapons than we do," Akhmed says of the Chechen predicament.

"We have better morale, better heart. The Chechens are fighting for their homes but the Russian soldier doesn't know why he's here."



A woman weeps at the grave of her husband near their destroyed home in Grozny (AFP photo)

North Korea's defence minister dies

SEOUL (Agencies) — North Korean Defence Minister O Jin-U, the second most powerful man in the reclusive state's hierarchy, died early Saturday of cancer at the age of 78. Pyongyang Radio reported.

Broadcasts monitored here said Marshal O, who flew to Paris for medical treatment last year, died at 2:30 a.m. (1830 GMT) in a Pyongyang hospital.

He outlived the Stalinist nation's late leader and his old comrade-in-arms, Kim Il-Sung, who died July 8, by only eight months.

North Korea's new de facto leader, Kim Jong-Il, 53, whose succession to power had been fiercely protected by Marshal O, visited him in hospital in Pyongyang the day before he died, KCNA said.

"Comrade O Jin-U shed hot tears, deeply moved by Kim Jong-Il's call on him at the hospital," KCNA said, indicating that his death had been expected.

Marshal O's death leaves Kim Jong-Il as the last remaining member of the permanent standing committee of the Stalinist state's Workers' Party, southern radio monitors said.

"Marshal of the Korean People's Army O Jin-U, member of the presidium of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, first vice chairman of the National Defence Commission of the DPRK (North Korea)... died after a long illness from cancer," the radio said.

His body was lying in state in the Feb. 8 House of Culture and a 240-member state funeral committee had been formed, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said. Mourners were invited to pay their last respects Saturday afternoon and would be received through Tuesday, ahead of a state funeral Wednesday, KCNA said. Marshal O was the highest-

ranking veteran of the first generation "revolutionaries" who fought alongside Kim Il-Sung against Japanese colonial rule.

In his last television appearance at a ceremony marking 100 days since Kim Il-Sung's death, the old marshal was seen limping to the junior Kim's side on the review dais, upright but frail and weak and leaning on a young soldier for support.

Marshal O was known as a staunch supporter of the Junior Kim, 53, Supreme Commander of the North's more than one million strong armed forces. The military's loyalty is considered vital to Mr. Kim's assuming full power.

Analysts here predicted no sudden change in the hierarchy or in Kim Jong-Il's formal succession to the country's two top posts after Marshal O's death, saying it had been long expected.

South Korean President Kim Young-Sam said Saturday the situation in North Korea is "abnormal" after the death of longtime leader Kim Il-Sung and defies any predictions.

"No one can say for sure how South-North (Korea) relations would evolve but time is on our side," Mr. Kim told local reporters.

Nearly eight months after Kim Il-Sung died last July, North Korea is still a headless state. His son and apparent heir, Kim Jong-Il, has not formally taken power.

On Saturday, North Korea's last Defence Minister O, who ranked No. 2 in hierarchy after Kim Jong-Il.

The South Korean president said North Korea's anti-Communist policy remains unchanged, despite the worldwide trend toward détente. He deplored the fact that the North's media uses vitriolic language to make personal attacks on him.

Although the two Koreas agreed in 1993 to stop propaganda directed at each other, the North's official



Undated file picture shows North Korean Minister of Armed Forces Marshal O Jin-U. The 78-year-old comrade-in-arms of President Kim Il-Sung and staunch supporter of his reclusive son, Kim Jong-Il, died early Saturday of cancer (AFP photo)

media has recently stepped a campaign against the South Korean leader, calling him a "traitor" and "stupid."

Mr. Kim also reaffirmed that South Korea will provide its Northern Communist rival with two modern light-water reactors if Pyongyang abides by a nuclear deal it signed with the United States.

The new reactors are in exchange for the North's promise to halt its suspected nuclear weapons programme. But the deal has hit a snag because North Korea refuses to accept South Korean-made reactors for political and technical reasons.

Kim Young-Sam said he and President Bill Clinton have agreed that the replacement reactors should be South Korean. Seoul officials have said they will pay most of the cost of the \$4 billion project only if their reactor model is adopted.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord Saturday reaffirmed that the nuclear reactors must come from South Korea.

"The reactors provided to North Korea must be South Korean reactors," said Mr. Lord before leaving after two days of intensive talks here.

Flights to Sarajevo Airport suspended

'Serbs terrorise Bosnia Muslims'

SARAJEVO (R) — Serbs have launched a fresh terror campaign against Muslims in northern Bosnia, beating and robbing civilians in a major abuse of human rights, U.N. refugee spokesman Kris Janowski said Saturday.

He said the Serbs' goal was to complete an "ethnic cleansing" operation to drive the last non-Serbs out of the area.

The attacks on Muslim families violated the terms of a four-month ceasefire which took effect in Bosnia at the start of the year and which is coming under increasing pressure.

The U.N. was forced to suspend flights to Sarajevo Airport Saturday after gun-fire hit a cargo aircraft as it landed.

Mr. Janowski told reporters: "In Gradiska (northern Bosnia) for the past month, Muslim houses have been systematically robbed and their occupants terrorised."

Armed men in uniform had severely beaten Muslim civil-

lians and ransacked their houses in villages around the Serb-held region of Banja Luka, site of ethnic expulsions of non-Serbs throughout the war.

Whole villages were asking to be evacuated, Mr. Janowski said. One Muslim man and his son had been shot and seriously wounded while another house had been targeted by a handgrenade.

"These are the last finishing touches of ethnic cleansing in Bosanska Kraina (northern Bosnia). That's basically what it is," he said. "And it is being condoned by the authorities."

He said the attacks made a mockery of human rights in general and Bosnia's current ceasefire accord, which obliged the combatants to respect human rights, in particular.

On Feb. 15, in the hamlet of Dzuze southeast of Banja Luka, three armed men beat a woman, threatened to rape

her and demanded her valuables while holding a gun to her head, according to U.N. field workers.

"They also held a knife to her child's throat and threatened to kill her mother-in-law," Mr. Janowski said. "Eventually they got 300 Deutsche marks. That was all the family had. But they still beat up the family afterwards."

The armed gang attacked another house nearby and other families fled to escape the assault. Their houses were also ransacked.

The armed men warned when they left that "they would be back soon."

The UNCHR had only received word of the incidents Friday and planned to raise the issue with Bosnian Serb authorities. But Mr. Janowski said the Bosnian Serb leadership has never made good on promises to halt ethnic expulsions during the course of the war.

"Since the authorities have

never done anything to curb these activities they are ultimately responsible," he said.

"We are not buying excuses these are rogue elements or that these people are out of control. We know from the past if the authorities wanted to establish control they could do it."

Serb "ethnic cleansing" continued to drive out Muslims and Croats from Serb-held territory. More than 250 civilians from northern Bosnia had crossed front lines into Bosnian government held territory at Turbe in the past few days, he said.

"There's a constant movement of people (out) and it can be explained by the way the remaining minority is being treated," he said.

Some 500,000 Croats and Muslims lived in the Banja Luka region before the war in Bosnia began in April 1992. Mr. Janowski said perhaps some 30,000 remain but it was difficult to estimate as civilians continued to be expelled.

Fujimori escapes mortar fire at the front

LIMA (R) — Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori came under mortar fire Friday as he trekked back from a jungle conflict zone with Ecuador, but no one in his group was injured, press reports said.

Mr. Fujimori, accompanied by soldiers, security personnel and reporters was hiking down a muddy trail when three mortar rounds banged down, one just 50 yards (metres) from the group, local television and radio reports said.

The president's group was walking back from a two-day journey to the Cueva De Los Tayos outpost a few miles from the Peru-Ecuador border when the barrage came, according to press reports.

"There are no personal tragedies to report. The president, in great spirits, decided to continue the march," said reporter Guido Lombardi of Radioprogramas Del Peru.

Reports of the attack could not be independently confirmed. Mr. Fujimori made no statements to the press afterward.

Meanwhile, an advance team of international observers in the afternoon returned from PV-1, Peru's command post near the disputed border area, to the northern coastal city of Piura.

But the head of the delegation, Brazilian Gen. Ariel Pereira Da Fonseca, told a press conference only that the mission's members had been impressed by the ruggedness of the terrain and high spirits of Peru's troops.

The observers, who Thursday visited a post on the Ecuador side in the month-old conflict, was slated to leave Peru for Brazil early Saturday.

Mr. Fujimori was two hours from PV-1 when the mortar attack came, according to reports. The three shells landed within 100 yards of Fujimori, according to the reports. Several reporters were shaken by the attack, Mr. Lombardi said.

Earlier Friday, Peru's military accused Ecuador of violating a ceasefire agreed to last week by bombing and firing artillery at Peruvian positions at Cueva De Los Tayos, Base Sur and Yiruma in the remote patch of Amazon jungle over the last three days.

In a statement, the Peruvian Armed Forces charged Ecuadorian troops had bombarded the area "despite knowing that the president of the republic... was in the area."

The Peruvian military also accused Ecuador of "indiscriminate use" of treaty-banned anti-personnel landmines and denied an Ecuadorian charge that its own forces have used toxic gas and flamethrowers.

In Quito, the capital of Ecuador, a military source contacted by Reuters denied the charge, saying "the anti-personnel or the anti-tank mines we use are not forbidden by any law."

In a satellite telephone interview from Cueva De Los Tayos, Mr. Fujimori said he had heard heavy bombardment in the disputed patch of Amazon jungle overnight and some mortar rounds in the morning but that fighting appeared to be dying down.

Scalfaro, Berlusconi in war of words

ROME (R) — Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro was locked in a bitter war of words with former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi Saturday as the media tycoon's calls for a snap general election remained unheeded.

"There is a parliament with full powers and a government which is just a month old. It was supposed to be a 'Cease-fire' government and we can't allow everyone to take potshots at it," Mr. Scalfaro told a meeting in the Tuscan city of Arezzo.

"They're already taking potshots at the head of state, there's no need to do it with the government," he added.

Former central banker Lamberto Dini took over as prime minister last month to head a stop-gap "government of experts" after Mr. Berlusconi was toppled by a mutiny by his Northern League coalition partner.

The billionaire businessman has continued to demand an early general election since his resignation, claiming that the "Northern

League's action betrayed voters who backed the Berlusconi-led Freedom Alliance at the polls last March.

Mr. Berlusconi launched a fierce attack on Mr. Scalfaro Friday, accusing him of trampling Italy's interests underfoot by refusing to order an early general election.

"I really do not understand how the person who is responsible for this decision can refuse to take it and trample the country's interests underfoot in such an absurd way," Mr. Berlusconi told a meeting of political allies.

Mr. Scalfaro is the only person with the constitutional power to dissolve parliament to allow an election.

Mr. Berlusconi suffered a fresh rebuff Friday night when the government announced that regional elections would be held on April 23. The tycoon had called for the regional polls to be put back to May and twinned with a general election.

Mr. Berlusconi argues that

only a general election can provide stability, while his opponents accuse him of plunging Italy into crisis with his continual calls for an early poll.

The lira has been battered to successive lows against the mighty German mark in recent days because of Italy's political uncertainties.

The outlook remains highly unclear but most political commentators believe that a general election is almost inevitable within the next few months in Italy.

The government is about to begin work on pensions reform, the fourth and final item on its limited agenda. Mr. Dini said this week that he hoped to present the reforms to parliament by the end of next month.

The prime minister has repeatedly stated that he will offer to step aside once his four-point programme has been approved. His resignation could open the way for the general election which Mr. Berlusconi has demanded.

Angola rebels 'stall' on troop pullback

LISBON (AFP) — The United Nations accused the opposition UNITA movement of stalling on the withdrawal of their troops from the northern province of Uige as required under a ceasefire plan, the Angola News Agency (ANGOP) reported Saturday.

ANGOP, monitored here, quoted the head of the U.N. Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II), General Chris Garruba, as saying the former rebels were not honouring their agreement to a troop disengagement plan signed earlier this month.

Gen. Garruba, speaking in Luanda after visiting the Uige area, said: "I am disappointed by all that I have seen on the ground and especially by the actions of UN-

ITA military personnel."

He said that troops from the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) of rebel chief Jonas Savimbi were still holding back from the pullback agreed at talks with government officers in Wako Kungo.

UNITA General Arlindo Chienda Pena and government army General Joao De Matos signed a joint declaration in Wako Kungo providing for the rebels to regroup all their forces in Uige province in the town of Negage.

Troops from both sides in Uige and the central city of Huambo are supposed to disengage by March 15 at the latest, after an original deadline of Feb. 15 expired.

Government spokesman

Higino Carneiro meanwhile accused UNITA of seeking to prevent the swift deployment of 7,000 U.N. troops in Angola and to wreck an overall peace accord reached in November in Angola and to wreck an overall peace accord reached in November in Lusaka which was designed to end nearly 20 years of civil war.

ANGOP Saturday quoted Gen. Carneiro as saying the government did not believe UNITA would abide by the accord.

The general said he feared reports Friday by a UNITA deserter, Isaac Monteiro "Zavarrá," that the rebels were preparing to reopen the conflict within two months with the aid of South African-trained mercenaries were true.

25 soldiers killed in Indian train blast

NEW DELHI (Agencies) — At least 25 Indian soldiers were killed and more than 30 others injured when two powerful bombs blew up a rail coach reserved for military personnel in northeastern India Saturday, news reports said.

Separatist Naga rebels are suspected to have caused the explosions at dawn as the speeding train, Tinsukia Mail, neared Diphu Station in Assam state, United News of India news agency said.

The site is near Nagaland state, the main theatre of battle for an independent nation for the Naga tribespeople.

The region, the easternmost strip of India, is about 2,500 kilometres east of New Delhi.

The soldiers were returning from neighbouring Manipur state after helping local authorities in conducting legislative elections.

The explosions ripped apart the car in which the soldiers were travelling and derailed three other rail coaches. Officials could not immediately say how the explosives were planted inside the coach.

Only eight bodies could be identified. The others were mutilated beyond recognition, Press Trust of India said quoting railway officials at the site of the explosion.

Naga tribespeople. India's Railway Minister C.K. Jaffer Sharief flew to the area to supervise relief operations.

Rebels of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, a Maoist group, have been fighting the Indian army for more than 40 years. The insurgency, which had peaked in the 1960s, has been weakened by a heavy induction of military in the area, but rebels continue to strike at military targets and even other tribespeople they perceive as sympathetic to the Indian government.

The Naga rebels say that tribespeople have a right to govern their traditional homelands and accuse Indian officials of being biased against the Naga tribes.

Meanwhile the Congress Party of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao Saturday won support of smaller parties and independent legislators, and formed a coalition government in the remote northeastern state of Manipur.

The party, which controlled a majority in the 60-member legislature before this week's voting, finished as the single largest party but failed to win a majority.

While the Congress Party won 21 seats, the Manipal People's Party, a regional group, won 18 seats. Both parties had wooed smaller parties so that they could prove to the state governor that they had enough support to form a government.

Rishang Keishing, was sworn in as chief minister by Gov. O.N. Malhotra after he established that he had the backing of ten other legislators and could claim a majority.

Manipur was one of the six states electing new legislatures in February and March.

Although the results have no direct bearing on the control of the federal parliament, they are being seen as a popularity test for Mr. Rao, who has faced growing criticism after his party was routed in three state elections late last year.

More than seven million people voted Saturday in the western Indian state of Gujarat, as the latest opinion poll predicted the loss of another prestigious bastion for embattled Prime Minister Rao.

As 10 hours of polling ended in the state, the main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), tipped to wrest Gujarat from Mr. Rao's ruling Congress (I) Party, said it was gearing for a snap general election.

More than 50 per cent of 14 million voters cast their ballots amid heavy security to choose 86 lawmakers in the 182-member state assembly, election commission officials in Gujarat's main city of Ahmedabad said.

Ninety-six assembly seats were decided in the first round of balloting Monday marred by violence that left one person dead and eight people injured.

Jordan Times

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Give 'AUA' a chance

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE in the country might receive a boost should the project to establish an American-style university materialise. So far, the sponsors of the plan are getting stiff opposition, especially from the Council of Higher Education. The Secretary General of the council dampened the hopes of the supporters of the idea when he said last week that "it is unlikely to be approved." Pouring cold water on the promoters of the ambitious plan was made easy by the existing three-year old resolution that forbids the creation of new private universities in governorates which already have institutions of higher learning. Amman, in particular, it is being stated, is already saturated with five universities and this in itself poses a formidable obstacle. Another argument being advanced by the opposition to the plan is based on the fact that the country has 17 universities already with a student body of more than 60,000. This, it is feared, will unduly spread university education and create a flood of over-qualified graduates that the market cannot absorb.

We find both arguments short-sighted. For starters, the country needs quality university education that is not currently available. It is not just the number of learning institutions that counts but also the quality of education provided. There can be no doubt that under current conditions, the level of our universities is clearly inferior to what is available outside the country, especially in the West. The best evidence of this is the fact that thousands of Jordanians still seek education in the U.S., Europe and other regions of the world. Existing universities may find the competition from an American-styled university too stiff to face but through such competition our national universities would be forced to improve in every sense of the word.

Imagine also the savings to the national economy that could be realised should we make alternative styles of education available to Jordanians. Moreover the kind of revenues that could be generated if Amman becomes an attractive place for academic excellence on par with what is being offered by the AUB in Beirut would be substantial. As for the equally fallacious argument that more universities would mean more "unaffordable" university graduates, it can be easily rebutted by the proposition that with or without an AUA, Jordanian students would still seek higher education if not locally then in foreign lands come what may and at the end pose the same challenge. It appears, therefore, that the opposition to an AUA does not have arguments strong enough to dismiss the idea as a whole. The only condition that we would apply in this context is the need to make sure that the proposed "AUA" is fully accredited by the U.S.A. Otherwise, the proposal needs to be given a chance.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Saturday accused the United States of seeking to clamp U.S.-Israeli hegemony on the Arab region through the peace process. The U.S. administration refuses to put an end to Israel's escalation of tension triggered by its raids on southern Lebanon and is unwilling to force Israel to evacuate the Golan and Southern Lebanon as a means of ending the deadlock on the Syrian-Israeli tracks, said the daily. Being the sponsor of the peace process, and having claimed that it was seeking to play the role of a full partner in the peace-making process, the United States is refusing to end the Egyptian-Israeli dispute over Israel's refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), refuses to mediate to end the deadlock in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations over the implementation of the Oslo agreement and seeks international backing to its quest to retain the U.N. embargo on Iraq. The paper said that the U.S.-Israeli alliance, which in the past was forged to stem Soviet influence, is now aiming at subjugating the Arab Nation.

A WRITER in Al Dostour discussed the continued U.N. sanctions on Iraq, saying that it is a well-known fact that the United States was perpetuating the embargo for its own selfish interests. Many nations, including those which took part in the U.S.-led coalition that launched war on Baghdad, have voiced their desire to end the embargo and the injustice against the Iraqi people, said Mohammad Kawash. But the writer said it is regrettable that these nations are not backing their sympathy with practical steps to see to it that the injustice is removed, and are only offering the Iraqis lip service despite their knowledge that Baghdad has implemented all U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

Lavish exemptions cost millions

BELIEVE IT or not, the generous exemptions contained in the Law on Encouraging Investment is costing the Treasury 29 million Jordanian Dinars (JD) a year. Needless to say, most of those investments enjoying the long tax holiday were to take place any way, irrespective of these exemptions, as a case by case study would reveal. It is obviously much easier for the minister of finance to grant an exemption that costs JD 1 million than to issue a cheque in the same amount and for the same person. Disbursement of funds is visible operation that needs a budget and it subjected to checking, while the cost of exemptions is not visible, has no ceiling, and does not need appropriation.

The issue may be of psychological or political nature. But from an objective point of view, exemption is costly. It does not differ from any other cash outlay or expenditure. Having that in mind, it is worth our while to identify the cost of exemptions that are thrown away right and left and centre, for good reasons sometimes, without justification more often and under the pressure of special interest groups always.

Let us single out one category of tax payers, the shareholding companies, and make some calculations of the cost of various exemptions applicable to them. The calculations revealed the following solid and documented,

but shocking, facts:

— The cost of deductibility of paid interest despite the existence of tax exempt interest received is JD 16.7 million annually.

— The cost of exempting dividends received by companies on their portfolios of shares in the capital of other companies is JD 1.22 million a year.

— The tax foregone in favour of approved economic projects under the Law on Encouraging Investment reached a staggering amount of JD 28.85 million in 1992, yet the government has in mind a more generous tax holidays for new investments.

— The exemption of agricultural activities, which is meant to help farmers and peasants, is saving shareholding companies JD 1 million per year.

— The partial exemption of profits related to exports was costing the Treasury some JD 1.25 million in 1992. The cost must have doubled after the recent sweeping exemptions of profits from exports which were introduced in 1993.

— If the government accepted the proposition of unifying the rate of corporate tax at 35 per cent, the proceeds of the tax will be slashed by JD 13.13 million.

In other words, the taxing of interest payable by non-financial companies will raise the proceeds by 23.2 per

cent.

Applying income tax for dividends earned by companies will yield 1.7 per cent more.

The abolishing of the investment law will raise the proceeds of corporate tax by 40.1 per cent.

Removal of agricultural exemption will require companies as a group to pay 1.4 per cent more.

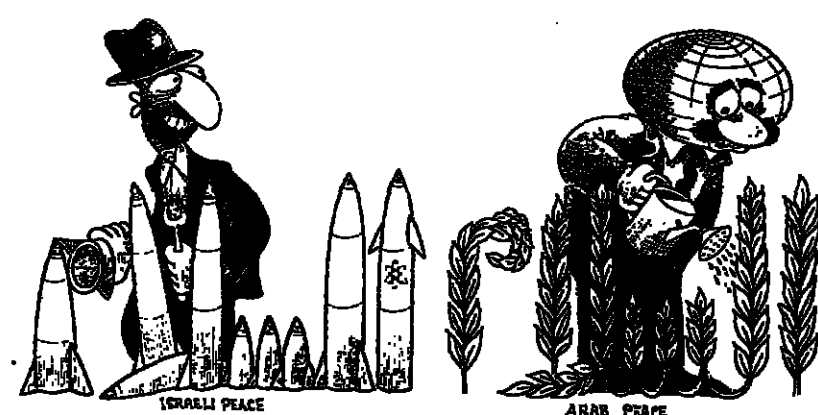
The lifting of tax exemption on exports will raise the revenue from companies by 1.7 to 3.5 per cent.

If we contemplate a unified rate of corporate tax at say 35 per cent, the Treasury should be ready to lose 13.3 per cent of its current receipts from companies.

We are not suggesting that exemptions should be cancelled all together in order to enhance revenue. We only want to put these exemptions under scrutiny, to identify their actual cost and to make sure that the benefits meant by the legislator outweigh the cost involved.

It is disappointing that the new government committed itself in advance to present to Parliament in a new law of income tax, which will not touch some of the most unreasonable exemptions. In this case, the only option remaining for the minister of finance is to appease pressure groups, especially banks, by granting them even more exemptions, irrespective of the cost involved.

M. KAHIL



Creation of new European security architecture under way

By Richard C. Holbrooke

The Clinton administration has assigned top foreign policy priority to the creation of a new European security architecture that will establish a viable structure for broad European security cooperation in the coming years.

It will be a multi-track effort involving all of the countries of Europe, the United States and Canada. As U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has said, this new structure must be inclusive and cooperative, and Russia must play an important role in it.

The new European security architecture is essential both for defining the U.S. role in a new Europe and for ensuring the development of a lasting peace across the entire continent.

Two initiatives launched by the United States in early December are designed to establish its basis. Ministerial meetings of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Council and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) in Brussels and in the Budapest Summit of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) set in motion processes for advancing the concept.

In Brussels, allied foreign ministers agreed on a gradual, transparent process leading to NATO enlargement: strengthening of NATO's Partnership for Peace (PFP) programme with non-member European countries, many of them former members of the Warsaw Pact; and developing a stronger relationship between NATO and Russia outside the PFP framework. In Budapest, action was taken to enhance OSCE's role in European security and conflict management.

The United States does not believe the NATO alliance can or should be the universal security structure in Europe. Instead, we believe NATO and the European Union (EU) should gradually project our common democratic values eastward through cooperative programmes and eventual enlargement while the OSCE works to develop a broader, more inclusive forum for consultation and action on issues not within the responsibilities of NATO and the EU.

Special emphasis must be placed on conflict prevention and crisis management, and the OSCE can serve as a consultative framework in this regard. Since NATO remains the foundation for

the security of all the EU countries, its expansion and that of the EU should be mutually supportive.

During the first half of this year, the NATO governments will examine how the alliance will be enlarged, what principles will guide this process, and what the implications of expanded membership will be.

During the second half of 1995, NATO will begin initial consultations and deliberations with interested partners. It's likely this process will include presentation of principles to guide NATO thinking on expansion, the "how" of enlargement, and the implications of membership for potential new members.

Stability in Europe is a critical goal of an expanded NATO. Expansion is not directed against anyone, and even more importantly, it is not intended to create new lines of division in Europe.

At the December NATO ministerial, Secretary Christopher suggested several fundamental principles to guide expansion. The process will be gradual, deliberate, and transparent. There will be extensive consultations with all interested parties and, as he put it, there will be "no surprises." Premature discussion of a time frame for expansion of specific countries for membership will be avoided. The focus this year will be on the "how" and "why" of expansion, not the "who" or "when."

While there will be no rigid criteria for membership, certain fundamental requirements are reflected in the Washington Treaty, NATO's founding document. New members must assume all the rights and obligations of membership; they must conform to certain basic precepts including democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law; they must be in a position to further the principles of the treaty and contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area.

Nations interested in becoming NATO members will be considered individually on a country-by-country basis. Some countries will enter NATO before others, and no country outside of NATO will have a veto over another's future membership in the alliance.

The decision to move towards NATO expansion does not downgrade the importance of the Partnership for Peace. Indeed, we see PFP assuming an even more important role as a framework for the evolution of NATO's rela-

tionship with the new democracies to the east.

For some of these new partners, PFP will be the best path to eventual NATO membership. For others, it will provide concrete evidence that NATO is concerned with their security and offers the primary means for lasting cooperation with NATO and other partners in such areas as peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance. To this end, NATO is committed to expediting the implementation of individual partnership programmes and will increase the number of joint land and maritime exercises with partner nations this year.

The NATO ministers affirmed that a cooperative European security architecture requires an active partnership with Russia, and they endorsed a broad agenda for NATO's relations with Russia, both within and outside the Partnership for Peace. This will be an important element in our multi-track approach to European security, and as NATO defines its expanded role in Europe, it will be essential to pursue a parallel track of dialogue with Russia.

This new security structure must be inclusive and cooperative, and Russia will play an important role in it.

Decisions taken at the Budapest summit strengthen OSCE and define an enhanced OSCE role in European security. The measures adopted at Budapest complement efforts within NATO to pursue cooperative, integrated security structures for Europe, and they provide OSCE with increased abilities and resources.

Leaders attending the Budapest summit made a political commitment to turn to the OSCE as the primary instrument in areas covered by its mission. Making OSCE a more robust organisation capable of taking meaningful steps in regional conflict prevention helps solidify our approach to a new, inclusive European security architecture. The strengthened OSCE will give all states in the Euro-Atlantic community a forum in which they can expect their security concerns to be seriously addressed.

These decisions, however, do not make OSCE a substitute for NATO, nor do they make it a tool to end wars such as the one in Bosnia. It is rather meant to efficiently address, and prevent escalation of conflict at the low end of the scale — or as President Bill Clinton

said, to prevent future Bosnias.

The OSCE will be an inclusive forum for discussion of European Security matters in which all states have an equal voice. It will continue its focus on human rights and conflict prevention, but it also is now capable of carrying out new tasks. Agreement to provide peacekeeping forces starts OSCE on the path to being a more meaningful security organisation with greater responsibilities, operating without regard to old cold war dividing lines.

The OSCE permanent council in Vienna has now become the primary body for political consultation and decision-making, although OSCE foreign ministers will continue to meet each year and political directors will meet twice a year to establish policy guidelines. The Budapest summit also decided to strengthen support for the organisation's High Commissioner for National Minorities, preventive diplomacy missions, and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

The summit leaders agreed to a Russian proposal to discuss a comprehensive European security model for the 21st century, giving countries outside NATO input into how future European structures might look. But this decision will not affect the right of each state to freely choose or change its security arrangements, including treaties of alliance.

At the Budapest summit, the United States secured agreement on developing a comprehensive framework for the future of conventional stability, arms control and confidence building, and establishing uniform principles that will set the standard for European non-proliferation goals.

Much work lies ahead to put the Budapest decisions into practice, and the United States will give highest priority to better defining the role of the OSCE in the evolving Euro-Atlantic security architecture, strengthening the consultative processes and political mechanisms of the OSCE, and bolstering the OSCE's overall capabilities in the area of early warning and conflict prevention.

(The author is U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs and one of the key Clinton administration officials responsible for developing the new European Security Architecture). The article is provided by USIS.

Fears of violence engulf Zulu land

By Craig Doonan
Reporter

DURBAN, South Africa — The boycott of South Africa's parliament by chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party has sparked fears of fresh violence in the volatile Zulu heartland of KwaZulu-Natal.

Mr. Buthelezi led Inkatha out of parliament in Cape Town on Tuesday, accusing the rival African National Congress (ANC) of failing to honour an agreement for foreign mediation over constitutional differences between them.

Violence monitors and political analysts said on Wednesday Mr. Buthelezi's action could escalate tension in KwaZulu-Natal, where thousands of people have died in political feuding between Inkatha and the ANC over the past decade.

Violence subsided after the country's first all-race elections in April last year, but it surged to 116 deaths last month in the Inkatha controlled province amid rising tension over Mr. Buthelezi's mediation demands.

The ANC swept the national vote and captured seven of the nine provinces, with Inkatha taking KwaZulu-Natal.

"The level of violence, the fatalities have always been highest when there have been boycotts and walkouts and threats. These are the times when deaths are highest," said Professor Alexander Johnston of the University of Natal.

Inkatha will hold a national congress on March 5 and 6 to decide whether to make permanent its provisional two-week walkout from the country's 10-month-old democratic parliament.

Political analysts said tensions escalated in KwaZulu-Natal, home to around six million members of South Africa's largest tribe, when the gap between parties widened.

"When the process becomes inclusive again, the

death toll drops. Therefore it would not be surprising if the death toll increased," Dr. Johnston told Reuters.

Kenn Naidoo, a political scientist at the University of Durban-Westville, said it would be simplistic to ascribe a jump in violence to the Inkatha walk-out. But he added that increased conflict was inevitable.

"Whether there are moves of this nature by any of the parties associated in KwaZulu-Natal, was seen as a sign of escalation. It need not necessarily be action taken only by Inkatha. Even when the ANC issues statements or acts to shake the normal course of events in this province we see an escalation in tension," he said.

Naidoo cautioned against reading too much into Inkatha's walk-out saying it was an accepted practice worldwide.

"If it accepted practice whenever one wants to express dissatisfaction and it's a strategic play," he said.

But violence monitors said history had shown that as the rift between the ANC and Inkatha's leadership widened, antagonism between their supporters rose.

"This could spur already existing divisions between the two parties as well as internal divisions within Inkatha. But mainly it will increase antagonism between the two rivals," says Sarah Kearney, a researcher at the independent watchdog human rights committee.

She said Inkatha's traditional stronghold in the north of KwaZulu-Natal and hostels around the port city of Durban were current flashpoints of violence and could erupt.

Violence monitor Mary de Haas said the central government had to act fast to prevent the further loss of life.

"We need more soldiers in volatile areas and we need credible detectives from outside this region to investigate violence and make key arrests," she said.

LETTERS

Refreshing change on J.T.V.

To the Editor:

AT A certain popular play, the running joke was how no one watched Jordan Television (JTV) anymore. We don't know how true this is, but "Hearbeat", a programme researched and presented by Maha Adnan, is definitely worth watching. It addresses a plethora of issues, ranging from specific national concerns to matters of international importance, such as AIDS and drugs, but within a Jordanian context. The programme is based on investigative reporting that attempts to trace the problem to its roots — a refreshing change. We decided to write this letter not only because we regularly watch the programme, but because we have heard a lot of praise about it from friends and acquaintances. So, we would like to tell Maha to keep up the good work and hope to see more initiative and quality media coverage.

Dana Toukan and Nadine Shabbat,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Israel widens blockade

(Continued from page 1)

States, Russia and Europe to intervene to end the naval blockade and Israeli aggression in South Lebanon.

At a Friday evening banquet for Muslim notables Mr. Hrawi, a Christian, said Israeli attacks were further hurting the deadlocked Syrian and Lebanese peace talks with Israel, which are sponsored by the United States and Russia.

"We call upon the two sponsors, Europe and sisterly friendly peace-loving countries to help us stop the tragedy in the south," Mr. Hrawi said. "It is impossible that we should pay the price for battlefield eruptions and peace process impasses."

The appeal was echoed earlier in the day by the foreign undersecretary, Zafer Hassan.

After a meeting with Mr. Hassan, U.S. Charge d'Affaires Ronald Schleicher demanded all sides "exercise restraint and seek ways to ease tensions."

He made the appeal amid fears in Beirut of a major Israeli operation in the south where Israel occupation forces frequently shell villages in fighting with Muslim guerrillas.

Hours after the blockade's tightening Israeli and allied

militia gunners shelled with artillery the outskirts of four villages controlled by Lebanon's pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God) north of the border zone, local security sources said.

The said Hizbollah fighters fired mortar bombs and rockets at two posts of Israel's proxy South Lebanon Army (SLA) on Friday night at the edge of the 15-km (nine-mile) zone.

Israeli and SLA gunners retaliated with artillery on Iqlim Al Toubah, a rugged ridge used by Hizbollah to attack the zone.

No one was hurt in Saturday's shelling or the Friday duels.

In a message to U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said his country was "not shelling Lebanon. It is striking Hizbollah positions."

Mr. Rabin said that when Lebanon "prevents Hizbollah and other ... groups from carrying out ... attacks ... there will be no need for further such action on Israel's part."

Hizbollah attacks and Israeli retaliations have escalated in recent weeks. So far this year, the violence has claimed 37 lives and wounded 58 people on the last hot Arab-Israeli war front.

PLO to launch offensive

(Continued from page 1)

Christopher visit.

The Palestinian cabinet was also briefed Saturday on Mr. Arafat's trips to France, United States, Cairo, Tunisia

and Saudi Arabia last week. Dr. Shaath said that Saudi Arabia pledged financial backing for the impoverished Palestinian self-rule and promised to support the PNA's efforts to speed up the peace talks.

Christopher still planning trip

(Continued from page 1)

very good spirit, he is stable, he had a restful night."

The secretary, who last travelled to the region in December, will consult with key regional parties about the current status of Arab-Israeli negotiations and will also hold discussions in the Gulf related to the peace process and to the maintenance of the Iraqi sanctions regime, Ms. Shelly said.

"Recent events have tragically demonstrated that the enemies of peace continue their efforts to keep Arabs and Israelis mired in conflicts of the past," Ms. Shelly said. "At the same time, those committed to peace have made it clear that they will not be intimidated and will work to find a way forward."

"This administration, in its role as a full partner, is determined to assist their efforts. Toward this end, the secretary will be exploring ways to consolidate agreements already reached and to lay the basis for a foundation for future progress."

The acting spokesman declined to comment when asked about a Damascus Radio report that voiced pessimism about the secretary's forthcoming trip. "There are ups and downs in the process. We know that," she said, "but he also believes that his presence is important in order to sustain the process, and that's certainly been a

factor in his decision to go. "We always listen to what the Syrians have to say, both publicly and privately. And it's a track in which, as the secretary has said many times, a considerable effort will be necessary this year in order to achieve the kind of progress we'd like to see."

Syria welcomed on Saturday Mr. Christopher's new tour but urged him to put pressure on Israel to accept total withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

It said Syria would never accept anything less than a full Israeli pullback from the Golan and that it would accept nothing that might harm its dignity.

The government daily Syria Times accused Israel of blocking the peace process and said Washington shared responsibility.

"... the USA is not using any pressure to persuade the Israelis to abide by the U.N. resolutions and the U.S. initiative of exchanging land for peace. And this is encouraging Israel to commit more and more crimes as it feels the U.S. green light is still on," Syria Times said.

"As a matter of fact, Israel wouldn't dare to behave in this way had the USA switched on the red light," it said. "Therefore, the USA must be aware Mr. Christopher's visit in the region won't lead to fruitful and constructive results if it does not switch off the green light," it said.

Rivals gun for Balladur

(Continued from page 1)

plomatic crisis to bolster Mr. Balladur.

The controversy blew open Wednesday when the respected newspaper Le Monde reported France had accused five Americans — four of them diplomats — of conducting political and economic spying for the CIA. France asked Washington to withdraw them from the country.

On Friday, the U.S. embassy, in a rare display of strong language, said Mr. Pasqua's comment that U.S. officials were to blame for the leaks that led to the report was "neither true nor credible."

U.S. officials have refused to reassign the five suspects accused by France. On Thursday, the U.S. State Department said the suspects would complete their regular tours of duty.

The row has set Mr. Pasqua at loggerheads with Foreign Minister Alain Juppe.

Mr. Juppe's ministry accuses Mr. Pasqua of leaking the French request in order to divert attention from a phone-tapping scandal linked to his Rally for the Republic Party.

Mr. Juppe, who is backing Mr. Chirac in the presidency, campaign, has asked for a government inquiry into the leaks.

Talibans collect weapons

(Continued from page 1)

The Taliban, who have captured nine provincial capitals in just six months have also demanded that the security of Kabul be placed in their hands, a matter now under negotiation by a U.N.-sponsored group who are also trying to devise an acceptable formula for Mr. Rabbani to transfer power.

Mr. Rabbani, whose two-year term of office expired Dec. 28, 1994, insists that the Taliban be part of the U.N. mechanism — or interim governing council — which the so-called "religious students" have so far refused.

Charasyab, the former

headquarters of Hezb-e-Islami faction leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, is now packed with all types of military hardware, tanks, artillery pieces of various calibres and rocket launchers, although not all is in working order.

One of two Russian-made military helicopters, MI-24 Hind attack gunships, was seen just two days ago being flown into the Taliban base from its hiding-place in the nearby mountains.

"The pilot and technicians came up from Kandahar to get this helicopter flying again," said the Taliban in charge.



GROZNY IN RUINS: Weeks of Russian bombardment have destroyed the Chechen capital

Chechen war focal point of Russia's electoral campaign

By Sergei Shargorodsky
The Associated Press

MOSCOW — In Chechnya, they fight with bullets, shells and rockets. In Moscow, the faraway war is reflected in a battle of words as politicians fight for public support and voter sympathy.

The parliamentary hearings on the war, which began Monday, showed that Chechnya is becoming a focal point of Russia's legislative elections campaign.

The duma, dominated by hardliners, also voted to appoint conservative lawmaker Stanislav Govorukhin to chair the commission.

The commission was not expected to produce tangible results. Its weaknesses

were as inherent as those of the parliament itself, written in the constitution that Mr. Yeltsin took such pains to push through in 1993.

Just as parliament was powerless to stop the unpopular war by its repeated appeals, Mr. Govorukhin's group of obscure legislators could at best point accusing fingers.

It was a purely political creation, and its hearings coincided with the unofficial start of electoral campaign: the buzzing behind the scenes, the shifting alliances, the recent creation of several new parties to compete in the December polls.

The hearings, however, did produce some finger pointing at Mr. Yeltsin, his government and reformist liberals.

"The aim of taking (the Chechen capital) Grozny in two days, improving his rating and reestablishing his popular image no doubt pushed the president into this crime," said ex-vice president Alexander Rutskoi, who led armed hardline opposition to Mr. Yeltsin in the fall of 1993.

The testimony of Mr. Rutskoi, who was jailed by Mr. Yeltsin for his role in the bloodshed and is now organizing his own political movement, unveiled some of the hardline rhetoric to be used in the campaign.

The aim is to portray Mr. Yeltsin as a ruthless leader prone to using force to achieve political ends — from sending tanks and troops against his foes in the old, disbanded legislature to sending tanks and

troops into Chechnya.

The opposition also is blaming Mr. Yeltsin and reformers for encouraging the separatist regime of Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev in their unscrupulous attempts to bring down the former Soviet Union.

Vladimir Kryuchkov, the former head of the Soviet KGB secret service and a mastermind of the failed 1991 communist coup, implied that Mr. Dudayev and those around Mr. Yeltsin at the time had much in common.

"Certain political forces in Moscow liked Dudayev because he was striking at the union's centre, at the Soviet Union and was against the state emergency committee," that staged the coup, Mr. Kryuchkov said.

The liberals are, now finding themselves on the defensive. Long opponents of the war and critics of Mr. Yeltsin, they now seem to have lost the initiative, forced to repeat what sounds like headline arguments.

"Even a head of state cannot take upon himself completely a problem of such magnitude. But he did and thus the responsibility for all that followed lies with him," said Sergei Kovalyov, Russia's human rights commissioner.

Mr. Yeltsin's centrist government is dismissing the criticism from right and left as populist games of irresponsible politicians. But it has to account for the bungled, bloody war — and so is choosing to blame the

military.

Mr. Yeltsin, whose popularity is at all-time low, spoke of the armed forces' "failures, setbacks and mistakes" during last week's address to parliament. He did not single out anyone by name.

The embattled army is firing back on all fronts, blaming its failures on political, military and even security services' leaders.

"As a military man, I believe that the leaders have committed strategic mistakes over Chechnya," the chief of the elite airborne troops, Col. Gen. Yevgeny Podkolzin, said Monday.

"The government is responsible for this operation. If the state wants to use force, the state has to provide for it."

Operation failure Somalia venture tarnishes U.N. diplomatic image

By Evelyn Leopold
Reuters

UNITED NATIONS — With considerable anguish, the United Nations withdraws from Somalia shortly, its only peacekeeping venture to end without achieving military or political goals.

"In Somalia, we learned to withdraw — and I do not mean retreat," said Kofi Annan, the mid-mannered Ghanaian U.N. undersecretary-general for peacekeeping.

"We can neither impose nor coerce peace," he told reporters, adding that the withdrawal should serve as a "wake-up call" to clan leaders to stop fighting.

In the wake of the mission, the world body, which entered the tattered east African nation full of good intentions, ended up tarnishing its reputation.

The death of 18 Americans in October 1993 made the United States gun-shy of peacekeeping, provoking the current controversy in the U.S. Congress that seeks, in effect, to take unilateral control of U.N. peacekeeping finances.

The Somalia experience also put an end to aggressive peacekeeping strategies, known as peace enforcement, proposed earlier by U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali.

And the operation showed that few nations, particularly the United States, were ready to sustain casualties — in Somalia or Bosnia — in the name of the United Nations.

The \$3 billion mission is scheduled to close down by March 6 after nearly three years of struggle that resulted in the deaths of 132 servicemen and untold numbers of Somalis.

Mr. Annan noted that the original action began in

1992 when post-cold war ambitions were high. "It was a different time, a different expectations about what the international community could do."

Dr. Ghali, when he took office in early 1992, was agitated at U.N. inaction in a country racked by civil war and famine next door to his native Egypt. But his efforts produced only limited results.

Propelled by outcries over the hundreds of thousands of deaths, then U.S. President George Bush in December 1992 dispatched more than 30,000 troops to distribute food aid.

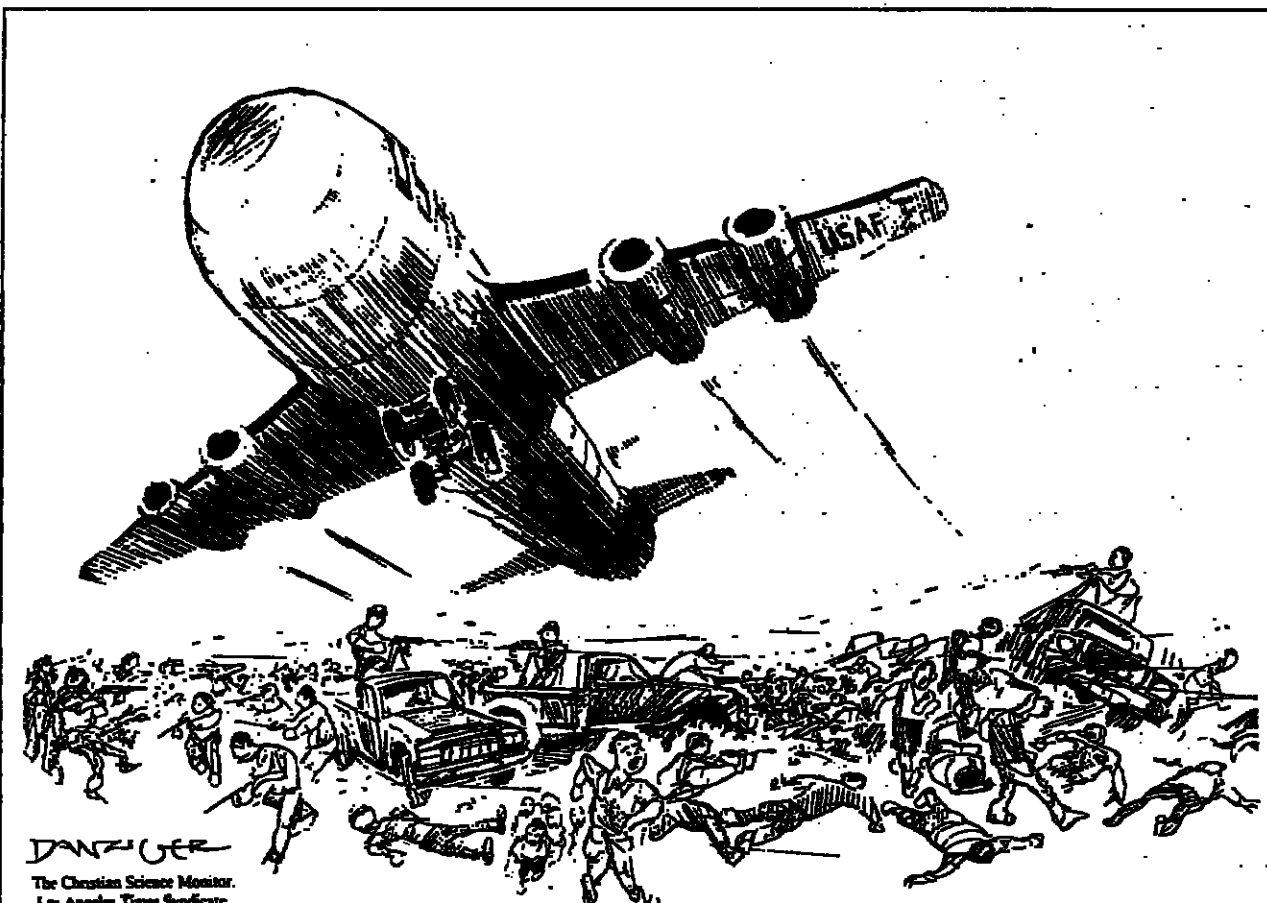
The Clinton administration, heading Dr. Ghali's pleas that chaos would return if U.S. troops pulled out, embarked on a hybrid operation that saw some American soldiers in the U.N. operation, others outside of it.

When 25 Pakistani peacekeepers were killed in June 1993 and 57 wounded, the Security Council authorised the troops to chase the Somali militia loyal to warlord Mohammed Farah Aided.

Two months later U.S. army rangers came ashore and in October 1993 they were trapped in a battle with Somali militiamen. A total of 18 Americans died, provoking an outcry in Congress and resulting in a March 1994 deadline for U.S. withdrawal.

Other Western nations followed, leaving mainly poorly equipped developing countries to carry on.

U.S. legislators blamed the tragedy on Dr. Ghali, a verdict engendered partly by Clinton administration officials who used the United Nations as a scapegoat for overreaching in Somalia and not doing enough in Bosnia.



Peacekeepers leave Somalia.

Now 7,000 American troops are helping evacuate the last peacekeepers in what U.N. officials readily acknowledge is a matchless capacity in military transport and logistics.

But the experience in Somalia, according to diplomats and U.N. critics, has been arguably blamed for:

— The end of offensive U.N. peacekeeping operations for years to come,

particularly proposals for some kind of standing army or rapid deployment force to prevent the often six-month delay before troops are organised and deployed.

— The unsuitability of the United Nations for coercive actions among troops from different countries without a unified command. Notable examples were the separate U.S. command, which included the ill-fated rangers, and the independent strategies

of Italian commanders — A bill in the U.S. House of Representatives to cut off nearly all U.S. peacekeeping contributions. Reports of waste and inefficiency, ending with the theft of \$3.9 million left in an office cabinet, did not help.

— A chilling message of U.S. retreat when American lives are at stake in a country not directly threatening the United States. The military junta in Haiti,

for example, immediately took advantage of the announced U.S. withdrawal in Somalia.

Pressed to sum up the venture, Mr. Annan said it was an experiment that saved lives, ended famine — and "did quite a lot of damage to the U.N."

"There is an old proverb," he said. "Travellers, there are no roads — the roads are made by walking."

Washington D.C. is broke

The Daily Crossword by Eugene Pullenberger

ACROSS

- 1 Swamp state
- 6 Bill of American soldiers
- 11 Somewhats
- 12 Isolated
- 13 Ice blue
- 15 Food reverently
- 19 Type of music
- 17 Singed hair
- 18 Jobbers
- 20 Fido's doc
- 21 Toasted
- 23 Unpleasant persons
- 24 Flute
- 25 Journalist
- 26 Stewart
- 27 APT deal
- 28 Water vapor
- 29 Fragrant surroundings
- 31 - public
- 33 Literary monogram
- 34 - deem
- 35 Language proclivities
- 38 Lacte
- 40 Buns and sausage
- 42 Adifice
- 44 Abundant deposit
- 45 Cornish wheat
- 47 Garlic
- 48 Mound
- 50 Broom
- 51 School letters
- 51 A verbal
- 53 Miss Piggy's
- 54 Potent pollen producer
- 55 Crazier
- 56 Cabbage
- 59 Podal
- 60 Pines
- 61 Lopsided horse
- 61 Pearlane
- DOWN
- 1 Handcuff
- 2 Start a quarrel
- 3 "But...on forever"
- 4 Thwip
- 5 Bump but narrowly

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Puzzle answer:

Business Daily Beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

Farmers foil 'open markets' experiment

★★ FARMERS' reluctance to sell their fruits and vegetables directly to consumers was behind the unsuccessful attempt to introduce the idea of selling produce on "open markets" launched at the beginning of this month by the Municipality of Greater Amman in cooperation with the ministries of supply and agriculture. According to Mustafa Abu Isbaa, the manager at the central vegetable market, farmers prefer to dump their produce in the hands of intermediaries and could care less about selling details.

Noting that the farmer himself was the key element to the success of the "open markets" idea, Mr. Abu Isbaa attributed the reluctance of the farmers to come forward and break the ring of intermediaries to their inexperience and their unwillingness to spend time on direct selling. He pointed out that farmers should have been made aware of the new system and encouraged to participate before launching and promoting the project.

Mr. Abu Isbaa emphasised that the intermediary was "the king of the game" as he solely benefits whether produce prices go up or down. The benefits, Mr. Abu Isbaa explains, are extracted from the farmers who do not want to enter into the selling dilemma and from the retailers who try to get the best quality for his customers (Al Ra'i).

★★ A PREPARATORY committee has been set up to arrange for the international economic conference slated for October of this year. The committee is headed by Industry and Trade Minister Ali Abul Ragheb and includes as members the secretary generals of the ministries of finance, information, planning and foreign affairs as well as the deputy governor of the Central Bank, the director-general of the stock exchange, the presidents of the chambers of industry and trade and Dr. Ahmad Mango (Al Ra'i).

★★ THE MINISTRY OF Justice intends to propose some amendments on punitive laws regarding bouncing cheques for insufficient funds. A committee is conducting a comprehensive review on the issue with special emphasis on giving judges the authority to substitute a jail term for a fine with the payment of the cheque amount.

Article 421 under consideration for amendment states that anyone giving a cheque without sufficient funds will be penalised by imprisonment and a fine without giving the judge the authority to replace the jail term with a fine after the payment of the cheque amount.

Under the old law of 1960, such an authority was given but it was dropped in the 1988 amendment. About 350,000 cheques, amounting to approximately JD 300 million, bounced last year. Courts resolved 5,000 lawsuits on this issue and imprisoned 4,000 persons as a result (Al Ra'i).

★★ THE INTENTION is to liquidate the Jordan Company for TV, Radio and Cinema Production due to its administrative and financial troubles (Al Ra'i).

★★ THE GENERAL assembly of the Arab Jordan Investments Company (AJIC) elected Abdul Qader Al Qadi as board chairman and Radi Ibrahim as deputy chairman. Elected as board members were: Hani Al Qadi; Samer Al Qadi; the Arab Jordan Investment Bank's (AJIB), Mahmoud Abdul Rob, Khaled Abu Eiseh, Bashar Al Lawzi, Raed Mohammad Jaber, Fahmi Abu Dayyeh, Hamed Jaber and Company. AJIC was set up last year with an authorised capital of JD 10 million.

German engineers' strike goes into second day

BONN (R) — Germany's first engineering strike for 11 years entered its second day Saturday amid signs that employers were not fully behind their federation's tough line. I.G. Metall, with three million members the biggest trade union in the Western world, has chosen 20 firms with 11,000 workers in the southern state of Bavaria as the place to start forcing through its demand for a six per cent pay rise.

On Saturday pickets stood at the gates of all the factories, including plants run by engineering giants Siemens A.G. and MAN A.G., to keep up the pressure although no employees would anyway have been due to work at the weekend. Bavaria is home to many of Germany's best-known engineering sector companies, including carmakers Audi A.G. and BMW A.G., but also has a strong contingent of medium-sized businesses which could suffer most if the strike is prolonged.

With employers still refusing to make any pay offer unless the union accepts compensation in the form of cost cuts, Finance Minister Theo Waigel called on both sides to return to the negotiating table after 34 unsuccessful rounds of bargaining.

"A strike is a burden on the economy, stability and a threat to jobs," he told Sunday's Bild Am Sonntag weekly, according to an advance release.

"Even one week of strikes is too much and would hurt our image as a country of political and social stability," he said.

Mr. Waigel said he expected the sides to reach a settlement that included a moderate pay rise — based on inflation and increases in productivity — as well as more flexibility of working hours.

However, the employers' federation Gesamtmetall has so far doggedly refused even to talk about a pay rise until I.G. Metall accepts cost-cutting measures including the postponement of a shorter 35-hour working week already agreed for Oct. 1.

The tactic is meeting increasing criticism from companies who believe the employers are losing the public relations battle, and putting orders at risk by stoking the strike.

Carliann Damm, chief executive of domestic appliance maker AEG Hausgeraete GMBH, one of the affected firms, said he was considering trying to do an independent deal with his workers, and possibly quitting the employers' federation.

Many employers say this pay round should have been much more straightforward than last year's, when a strike was averted by an eleven-hour pay deal.

Klaus Bregger, chairman of the Christian Democratic Party's small- and medium-sized business lobby, told SAAR Radio:

"I consider it the duty of the employers' federation to put its cards on the table," he said, while adding that firms should be able to do more individual deals with their own workers.

Industrialists urge Group of Seven to set up information highway rules

BRUSSELS (R) — World business leaders on Saturday called on the Group of Seven (G-7) industrial nations to create global rules to guarantee competition and guard against piracy on the information superhighway.

Executives from some of the world's biggest corporations driving the information revolution blending television, computers and communications networks said governments should move faster to ensure fair competition or risk delaying the creation of millions of new jobs worldwide.

Business leaders argued that the highest priority must

be given to dismantling trade barriers, agreeing on technical standards to make sure global networks are compatible, and determining what services people really want.

"Now it is time for governments to take action to set clear rules on a global scale and create a favourable environment for a new wave of investment by the private sector," said Carlo de Benedetti, chairman of Olivetti, the Italian computer maker.

Mr. De Benedetti, as chairman of the European Roundtable of Industrialists (ERT), proposed that businessmen from Europe, the U.S., Canada and Japan

draft clear proposals for the next G-7 meeting to accelerate construction of information superhighways.

"We urge that a clear action plan be put on the agenda for the next G-7 summit in Halifax," he said, referring to a full summit in the Canadian city.

Two forces were driving the information revolution, Mr. De Benedetti said — technological developments that make it easier to transfer large amounts of data and the emergence of an interconnected global economy, which is making national borders irrelevant.

"These two forces will

shape the world economy and will lead us into a major development cycle that has no precedent in history," he said.

Government ministers from the United States, Canada, France, Britain, Japan, Germany and Italy were meeting with business leaders to discuss what needs to be done to create a global information society.

Several corporate executives said changes to industry and society at large as a result of the new technologies would have consequences far greater than those following the industrial revolution.

Educators and researchers attending the round table discussion pointed out that there would be vast changes in the way people learn as more and more information is made available on public networks.

"Most people think this is about 500 television channels, but it's not," said Michael Dertouzos, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "This is about books, about managing money, health, recipes, it's about learning, human speech and a lot more."

Michael Spindler, chief executive of Apple Computers, echoed the common theme expressed during the three-day conference by business leaders from around the world.

"Technology is no longer a hindrance. The barriers are political," he said.

Reflecting the concerns of many of the world's publishers about misuse of their products on global computer networks, Mark Woessner, chairman of Bertelsmann AG, called for new, global copyright laws.

"This is only possible by creating a new copyright management system," he said.

U.S. Vice President Al Gore told industrialists nations Saturday the United States would open its telecommunications markets to anyone who did likewise as a way of boosting the information society of the future.

At a speech to a (G-7) confer-

ence on ways to exploit new technologies, Mr. Gore said Robust competition was essential for countries to achieve their goals.

"Whether by new law or new regulation, we intend to open foreign investment in telecommunications services in the United States for companies of all countries who have opened their own markets," he told a lunch of G-7 ministers and European Union dignitaries.

The (G-7) — the United States, Japan, France, Italy, Germany, Britain and Canada — is meeting in Brussels for weekend discussions on ways to boost the information society, a world where computers, telephones and television converge in a vast global link-up.

"Empowered by the movable type of the next millennium we can send caravans loaded with the wealth of human knowledge and creativity along trails of light to every home and village," Mr. Gore said.

The meeting is surrounded by a dazzling array of high-tech wizardry at a trade fair featuring everything from a machine that reads palms to replace passports to computers that track the destruction of the rain forest.

"The best way to drive this revolution forward is for governments to understand that the customer's choice is the major driver," Peter Bonfield, chairman of Britain's computer manufacturer ICI told the group.

Mr. Gore, a long-time advocate of high technology, told the G-7 ministers that as well as opening markets they needed to develop effective property rights guarantees for traffic travelling on the information superhighway, and that common standards needed to be set for the technology.

G-7 partners disagree on some aspects of the way forward, particularly how to protect national cultures from drowning in American products.

Financial Markets

in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Mar 25/2 95	New York Close Mar 24/2 95
Sterling Pound	1.5250	1.5685
Deutsche Mark	1.4787	1.4610
Swiss Franc	1.2492	1.2453
French Franc	5.1315	5.1485
Japanese Yen	96.77	96.95
European Currency Unit	1.2710	1.2750

(USD per JLD)
European Opening: 10:00 a.m. (GMT)

Source: Reuters

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COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PLC	40	7500	188.750	189.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	11070	49000	4.500	4.500
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	1846	8000	4.350	4.320
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	250	380	1.540	1.520
THE JORDANIAN BANK	750	2078	2.780	2.750
JORDAN KIWAT BANK	23181	6.050	6.060	6.060
JORDAN GULF BANK	6991	19771	3.000	3.000
JORDAN TELECOM BANK	8156	11399	1.400	1.390
BUSINESS BANK	11039	43993	4.000	3.950
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	20000	70400	3.520	3.520
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	1400	4480	3.150	3.200
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	4981	6398	1.290	1.290
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	1586	6578	4.150	4.150
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	4900	6958	1.430	1.420
BANKS SECTOR	76499	261024	INDEX NUMBER: 161.47	CHANGE: -0.02%
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	2500	6347	2.550	2.520
DELTA INSURANCE	250	35	1.350	1.420
INSURANCE SECTOR	2750	6702	INDEX NUMBER: 136.87	CHANGE: -0.14%
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	4644	7185	1.550	1.550
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	15328	23003	1.500	1.490
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	100	570	4.650	4.700
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	2750	9403	3.420	3.410
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	4250	9851	2.350	2.350
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	500	600	1.250	1.250
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	19788	19788	2.350	2.350
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	3700	13019	3.510	3.530
SERVICES SECTOR	39719	83518	INDEX NUMBER: 132.40	CHANGE: -0.03%
JORDAN TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	20	680	34.500	34.000
ATTAHMEZ COSMET. MANUFACTURING	250	325	1.350	1.300
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	17490	53409	3.050	3.060
THE ARAB POTASH/NEW	100	500	5.000	5.000
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	813	7132	9.450	9.500
THE JORDANIAN COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	706	796	4.000	3.980
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	3857	10117	4.740	4.690
JORDAN DAIRY	401	822	2.100	2.050
THE JORDAN PIPES MANUFACTURING	1000	2700	2.700	2.700
RAFA INDUSTRIES	22776	22776	2.510	2.510
DAR AL DAMA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	2600	20782	8.000	7.970
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	250	243	.970	.970
ARAB ALUMINIUM INDUSTRIES	800	3357	6.720	6.700
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	4500	3509	.770	.760
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	2250	3216	1.430	1.420
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	300	1200	4.000	4.000
INDUSTRIAL PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	250	595	2.400	2.390
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MACH/JORDO	200	156	.770	.750
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	100	480	4.800	4.800
JORDAN SULPHUR-CHEMICALS	300	507	1.710	1.690
ARAB CENTER FOR FISHING & CHEMICALS	2500	2500	2.650	2.620
KANTHER INVESTMENT	1500	2520	1.680	1.680
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	1150	4807	4.200	4.180
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	4250	8872	2.090	2.080
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	52081	163320	INDEX NUMBER: 124.64	CHANGE: -0.12%
GRAND TOTAL	171049	514564	INDEX NUMBER: 144.14	CHANGE: -0.06%
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	179571			
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET	207938			

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Cantona banned for 7 months

ST ALBANS, England (R) — Fiery French striker Eric Cantona was on Friday banned from playing soccer for seven months and fined 10,000 sterling (\$15,900) by the English Football Association for his two-footed attack on a spectator.

A three-man disciplinary committee suspended the Manchester United player "from all football activities" until September 30 after finding him guilty of bringing the game into disrepute.

Cantona told the committee he was deeply sorry for last month's attack on a Crystal Palace fan that was seen by millions on television.

He sat stony-faced with his arms folded and said nothing after the verdict was announced at a news conference. Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson was equally reticent but the club's lawyer said he thought the ban was a "bit harsh".

The ban goes beyond the measures taken by Manchester United who told the former French captain in January he could not play for the club again this season. The Premier League champions also fined him two weeks' wages — 20,000 pounds (\$31,800).

The F.A. fine was the equivalent of a week's wages for Cantona, whose career has been bedevilled by clashes with authority.

"I don't think he got off lightly. His particular sin was going into the spectator's area," F.A. chief executive Graham Kelly said afterwards.

Cantona jumped into the crowd with both feet flying after a spectator ran down to the touchline to abuse him when he was sent off for a foul. English soccer has been tarnished by crowd violence, allegations of bribery and drugs problems this season.

Police on Tuesday charged the former French captain with common assault. He is to appear in court on March 23.

The Football Association, announcing its ban, said it had taken account of a number of factors — Cantona's previous record, the provocation he faced the fan, his expression of regret and assurances of good behaviour in future.

"We are concerned about the increasing level of abuse that footballers seem to have to suffer — we don't think it is acceptable, we don't think it is part of the game," Kelly said.

He considered Cantona's apology sincere. "He has come

along today and has said there will be no repetition of this sort of incident. I think he recognises the gravity of it."

Cantona's French lawyer, Jean-Jacques Bertrand, had said he feared the star could receive a permanent worldwide ban. Neither the club nor Cantona will appeal but United, champions for the past two years, were upset by the decision.

"I think it is a bit harsh," Manchester United lawyer Maurice Watkins said. He said Cantona would continue to be paid by the club but would not receive any bonuses.

"He expressed his regret deeply and sincerely," Watkins said of the disciplinary hearing.

This is the second major English soccer inquiry in two days. On Thursday the Premier League found sacked Arsenal manager George Graham received a 'bung' (payment) of 425,500 pounds (\$677,500) from an agent as a result of his purchase of two Scandinavian players.

It stopped short of saying Graham had broken any regulations or of announcing any sanctions on the manager, sacked by Arsenal on Tuesday after they were informed of its findings.

In Paris, French league president Noel Le Graet said Cantona's sanction was severe.

"I thought the English Association would be content with the decision already taken by Manchester United to suspend him for the remainder of the season," he said.

"The new sanction is tough because it will prevent him from starting the next season," he said.

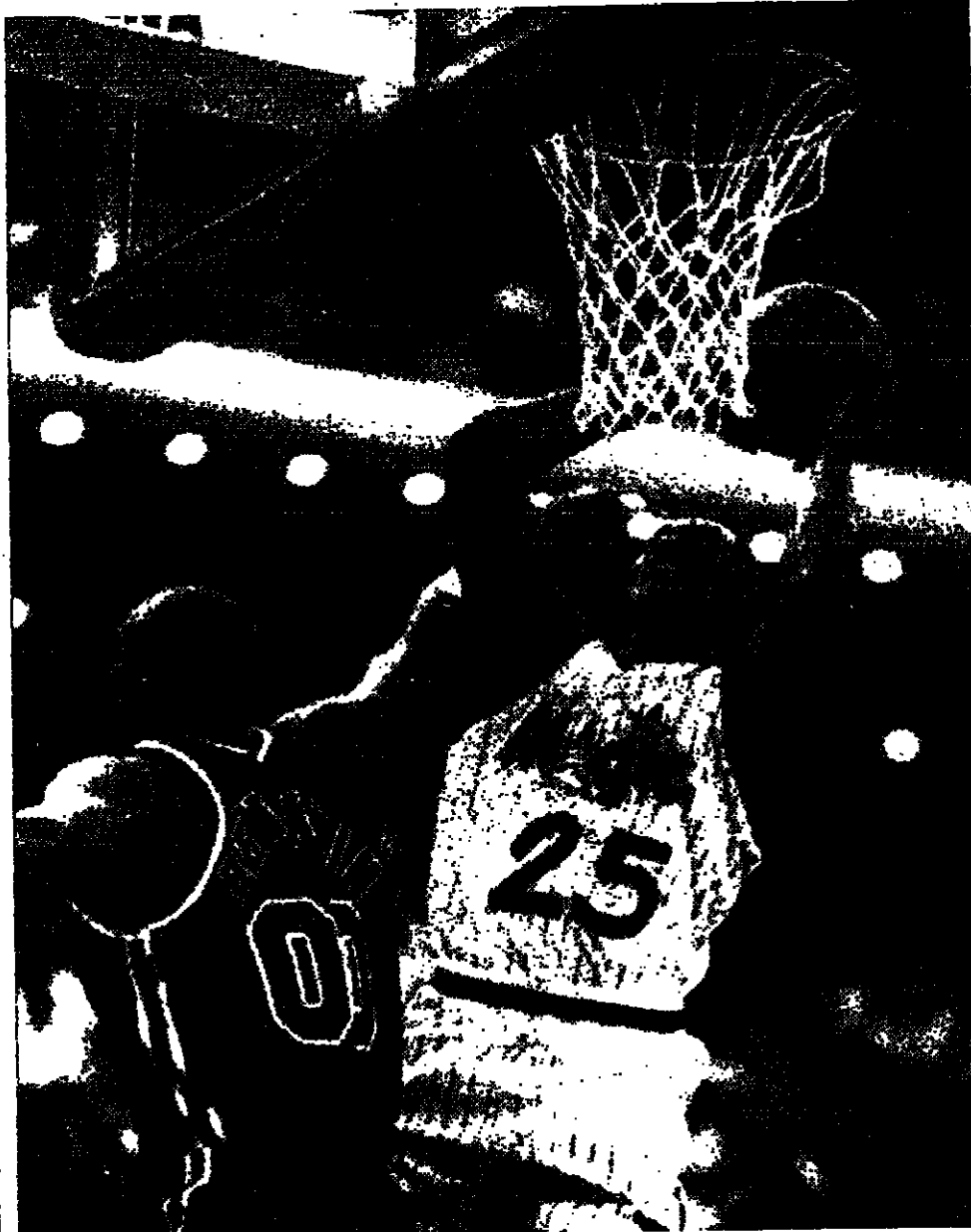
Cantona, who was stripped of the French captaincy, will miss four of France's qualifying matches for the 1996 European Championships while serving his ban.

Le Graet added: "I've already said that Cantona could not be France's captain any more and that still stands, even if his behaviour in the team has always been exemplary."

Manchester United chairman Martin Edwards said the club was disappointed by the F.A.'s decision to extend the club's own ban.

"We felt a ban until the end of the season and a maximum fine was the right punishment, but obviously the F.A. have decided to add to that. We could appeal, but we won't," he said.

"I cannot say more than we are disappointed with it, but we accept their decision."



Orlando Magic guard Nick Anderson #25 slams a basketball over an opponent (AFP photo)

Shaq ejected but Orlando gets revenge

ORLANDO (R) — The angry giant was banished, but his teammates stepped up big.

Orlando centre Shaquille O'Neal was thrown out of the game in the first quarter, but the Magic elevated their game to trounce the Celtics 129-103 on Friday and avenge a defeat by Boston the night before.

O'Neal, the league's leading scorer, was ejected with 4:35 left in the first quarter after he threw a punch or hard shove at Boston centre Eric Montross, who had slowed him down just enough in the second half the night before for the Celtics to beat Orlando.

Nick Anderson and Anfernee Hardaway scored 27 points apiece for the Magic,

who lost to Boston 119-117 Thursday.

Orlando guard Brian Shaw and forward Horace Grant both missed the game due to back spasms.

"Every disappointing," Boston coach Chris Ford said. "They were down two players and then Shaq gets tossed out. Instead of taking advantage of all those opportunities, we just caved in. They stepped it up, they got mad, they got aggressive, they took it to us and beat us in every fashion possible."

In Phoenix, Charles Barkley scored 25 points and Wayman Tisdale added 18 off the bench as the Suns routed the Los Angeles Clippers 118-106.

The Suns, who were coming off their first consecutive

losses of the season, improved to 23-5 at home and kept pace with Orlando for the league's best record at 41-13.

At Los Angeles, Elden Campbell hit a 10-foot baseline jumper with 2.5 seconds left in overtime to lift the Lakers to a 95-93 victory over the Charlotte Hornets.

Anthony Peeler had a career-high six 3-pointers en route to 27 points and Vlade Divac scored 25 points and matched his career high with 24 rebounds.

Campbell had 18 points and 16 rebounds for the Lakers, who have won eight of their last nine games, including four straight and five in a row at home.

At New Jersey, Derrick Coleman had 23 points and Chris Morris 20 as the Nets beat the slumping Dallas Mavericks 114-104.

Dallas' Jimmy Jackson, the league's fifth leading scorer, left the game after injuring his left ankle midway through the first quarter.

In San Antonio, David Robinson scored 12 of his 37 points in a fourth-quarter run as the Spurs pulled away for their fourth straight win, 114-97 over the Detroit Pistons.

In Miami, Glen Rice scored 24 points and Eric Owens had 21 points and 10 rebounds as the Heat defeated the Chicago Bulls 91-83.

Scottie Pippen scored 22 points to lead Chicago.

In Portland, Rod Strickland scored 30 points as the Trail Blazers cruised to a 114-101 victory over the Utah Jazz.

Karl Malone scored 26 points for Utah, which has lost five of its last six road games after a 15-game road win streak.

In Milwaukee, Dale Davis scored 21 points and grabbed 14 rebounds to lead the Indiana Pacers to their fifth straight win, 98-86 over the Bucks.

In Baltimore, Steve Smith scored 27 points and Mookie Blaylock added 25 as the Atlanta Hawks handed the Washington Bullets their sixth straight loss, 107-92.

The Hawks won for the sixth time in their last eight games. The Bullets have lost 12 of their last 13.

In Seattle, Shawn Kemp scored nine of his 13 points in the fourth quarter, including a pair of free throws with 1:28 left to break a tie, as the SuperSonics beat the Denver Nuggets 90-86.

The loss broke a three-game winning streak for Denver.

Hull from '92 champs bows in defeat

SAN DIEGO (AFP) — A yachting era ended here Friday off Point Loma.

Dennis Conner's Stars and Stripes won the last race in the third round of America's defender trials by one-minute and 52 seconds over the all-woman crew aboard America3.

Challenger races were concluded earlier. Fourth-round action for U.S. defender hopefuls and international challengers begins in March.

The race was the last for the America3's USA-23 hull, which will be replaced by the new USA-43 for the fourth round-robin starting March 2. USA-23 was the hull that carried the America3 crew to victory in the 1992 America's Cup.

The long-and-narrow design parameters of USA-23 also became the guide that many naval architects followed for the 1995 event.

"It's kind of sad to put her

to bed," America3 president Bill Koch said of USA-23. "A lot of people don't realise how significant USA-23 was."

"At the time it was built, everyone was going for stability and wide boats. We went long and narrow. Now everyone is going long and narrow. USA-23 changed the game. Being copied is great flat-

only three of 16 races, the women aboard USA-23 were a distant third with seven points.

"We need a new boat," team captain Dawn Riley said. "As good as USA-23 was, her day was yesterday. I really wanted to win this last race in the old boat. I guess I was sentimental until I saw

America's Cup

tery."

Three years after its day, America3 was competitive in some conditions, particularly going into the winds in more than 10 knots. But the new generation boats had surpassed USA-23's downwind abilities.

The defender's third round-robin ended with Young America and Stars and Stripes tied for the lead with 25 points. Winners in

the new boat."

"Most people don't realise how significant some of USA-23's innovations were," said Koch.

When USA-23 was launched in 1992, Paul Cayard, then skipper of challenger II Moro Di Venezia, remarked: "If USA-23 is right, then everyone else is wrong."

"Everyone else was wrong," laughed Doug Peterson.

Japan bids for 2002 World Cup

TOKYO (R) — Japan is to confirm on Monday it is formally joining arch-rivals South Korea in the race to stage the 2002 World Cup finals.

Mexico has also lodged a bid but a FIFA spokesman said the country had not yet formally confirmed it, but could do so by mail or fax before "next Tuesday's deadline."

Japan's bid committee said Shunichiro Okano, vice-president of the Football Association of Japan, and Junji Ogura, the committee's secretary-general, would hand over the written confirmation of the bid and a letter from Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama to FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter.

It said the letter of official declaration of intention to host the finals, written by Ken Naganuma, president of the Football Association of Japan, was submitted to FIFA through fax on Friday.

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Louganis to meet public

NEW YORK (Agencies)

— The taped interview in which Greg Louganis admitted he has AIDS and was HIV-positive at the 1988 Olympics was shown Friday, even as the diver prepared for his first public appearance since the disclosure.

The conversation between Louganis and Barbara Walters was broadcast on the television show "20/20," but excerpts and transcripts released by the ABC network had already revealed the story.

Louganis, who admitted his homosexuality last year, plans to appear here Monday at A Different Light bookstore to sign copies of his autobiography, "Breaking the Surface."

An excerpt of the book, published by People magazine, said Louganis was driven to excel by "a lifetime of fear and pain."

Louganis, 35, said after striking his head on the diving board in Seoul he was "paralyzed with fear" that his blood might infect other divers or the doctors who treated his injury.

The doctor has since tested negative for AIDS and medical experts said there was no danger of contamination from any blood in the diving pool.

"AIDS risk from Louganis' 'infinitesimal'"

In Lausanne, Switzerland, the Chairman of the IOC medical commission, Prince Alexandre de Merode, said Friday the risk of Greg Louganis infecting other divers at the 1988 Seoul Olympics had been "infinitesimal."

The American diver, who had not told officials he was HIV positive, hit his head on the edge of a springboard and blood dripped into the pool.

The athlete, who only revealed he had AIDS last week, was at the time worried about the safety of other athletes.

But Merode said there had been no danger to others as the virus could only be spread by "direct contact of body fluids." Merode added there was no reason to demand from athletes a declaration of whether they were HIV positive or not before competing.

Louganis says he was raped

In New York, diver Greg Louganis, the U.S. Olympic gold medal winner who said earlier this week he has AIDS, tells in a recent article of a six-year homosexual relationship, with an abusive lover, who raped him.

Saying that like most battered spouses he "wanted love and approval," Louganis describes his volatile relationship with a man he calls Tom.

He details a 1982 incident when his lover went into a tirade, came at him with a knife and then raped him.

In a People Magazine excerpt of Louganis' book, "Breaking the Surface," the diver also describes painful memories of his adoptive father who, he says, only took an interest in him when he was diving.

Louganis recalls one occasion when his adoptive father beat him with a belt until he successfully finished a new dive he was practising.

"He hit me across my backside and legs until it burned. That I can't forget," Louganis said.

Detailing the sexual abuse he encountered with his gay lover, the diver said it took place in 1983, and was "over the fact that he wasn't the only man I'd been sexually involved with during that time."

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	Robert De Niro & Nick Nolte in Cape Fear Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Home Alone II Shows: 12:30, 2:30, 8:30, 10:30	CONCORD '1' BAD GIRLS Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 8:15, 10:30 CONCORD '2' SPEED	Mousa Hijazin "Sumaah" in the political comedy "Hi Citizen" Author and Director: Mohammed Al Shawaqfeh Daily starting 8:30 p.m. Monday is the weekly holiday	Presents Abu Awwad In the social comedy Punctured Bag The theatre is closed on Mondays Tickets are available all day	Presents: The political satire: AL SALAM YA SALAM at 8:30 p.m. For reservation, please call 625155 The theatre is closed on Saturdays & Sundays

Holyfield medical suspension lifted

LAS VEGAS (R) — Former world heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield received a split decision on Friday in his battle to end his medical suspension and fight again.

The Nevada State Athletic Commission, which regulates boxing in the state, lifted its medical suspension of Holyfield, clearing the way for other states to allow him to fight again, but it did not rule on whether he could fight in Nevada.

The commission issued its medical suspension when Holyfield was hospitalized immediately after he lost by decision to Michael Moorer here last April 22. Holyfield retired four days later after he was diagnosed as suffering from a heart condition — a stiff left ventricle.

The commission did not have the opportunity at its monthly meeting to grant or deny the 32-year-old Holyfield a licence to fight in Nevada because his request for a licence was withdrawn in a letter from his attorney.

The medical suspension by the commission, one of the most influential boxing reg-

ulatory bodies in the world, had effectively prevented Holyfield from being licensed throughout the United States.

Holyfield's promoter, Main Events Inc, plans for the former champion to fight Ray Mercer on May 20 in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Dr. Elias Ghanem, one of the five commissioners, on Friday reiterated that he is not satisfied with medical data supplied to the medical advisory board by Holyfield's physicians.

"I have some unanswered questions about Evander's medical condition," said Ghanem, the only commission member who is a physician.

The commission's vote to lift the medical suspension on Holyfield was 4-1 with Ghanem dissenting.

A five-member medical board that advises the commission voted unanimously earlier this year to relicence Holyfield.

Holyfield can reapply for a licence to fight in Nevada by requesting that the matter appear on the regulatory

body's monthly agenda.

But commission chairman James Nave said he will not consider placing such a request on the agenda until the body "receives more information and also the opportunity to speak with Dr. Ron Stevens." Stevens is Holyfield's physician.

According to Ghanem, Stevens told him in a recent telephone conversation that he could not discuss Holyfield's medical condition, at the fighter's request.

Holyfield, with a record of 30-2, was world heavyweight champion from 1990 to 1992, when he lost to Riddick Bowe.

Then in 1993 Holyfield beat Bowe to capture the World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation versions of the heavyweight title.

Bowe had relinquished the World Boxing Council portion to Lennox Lewis of Britain, who lost it to current champion Oliver McCall. Moorer lost the WBA and IBF portions to current champ George Foreman.

Chang, Agassi in U.S. indoor semis

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Defending champion Michael Chang beat Jonathan Stark 6-7 (7-5), 6-1, 7-6 (7-4) on Friday in the quarterfinals of the U.S. Indoor.

Chang will face Paul Haarhuis in a rematch of the 1994 final. Haarhuis followed his upset of top-ranked Pete Sampras with an easy 6-2, 6-3 victory over New Zealander Brett Steven.

The other semifinal pits No. 2 Andre Agassi, who brushed off qualifier Sebastian Larreau 7-5, 6-2, against 20-year-old Thomas Enqvist of Sweden, a 6-4, 6-3 winner over Richey Reneberg.

"I just try not to let that little yellow ball bounce twice. You never know when you'll be able to run down a shot," said Chang, a loser to Stark just last week in Memphis.

Trailing 5-2 in the third set, Chang won 12 of the next 14 points to tie. In the tiebreaker, match point was vintage Chang — a running, reaching backhand that passed Stark at the net.

"If he can get a racket on it, he can win the point," Stark said.

Chang, seeded third and ranked No. 6, lost first-set tiebreaker after fighting off four set points. Chang sprinted between the sidelines chasing down overheads and drops. He broke Stark three times in the second set.

Following his match with Chang, Haarhuis plays a doubles semifinal.

"You get tired sometimes, and it's always tough to come back early the next day. But today, I started off on the right note, got a break and never looked back," Haarhuis said after his 62-minute win.

Serving at 15-40, Steven couldn't handle Haarhuis' high-hopping return, hitting a backhand into the net to give the lanky Dutchman the match and a fourth service break. Haarhuis lost just 13 points on his serve and didn't allow a break.

Agassi has won all 15 of his matches this year while losing only two sets, and has won 37 of his last 39. But he wasn't sharp against Larreau, the 114th-ranked Canadian who has won 14 matches in his career.

"I felt very sluggish. The ball looked like a BB. I think I'm lucky I didn't lose that set," Agassi said. "Hopefully, tomorrow I can come out a little more up against Enqvist."

Agassi lost to Enqvist in the 1993 U.S. Open.

Reneberg dropped serve four times to the 43rd-ranked Enqvist, but he fought off two match points with sharp



Michael Chang

returns. He scooped a forehand over the baseline on the third match point.

Reneberg, a former No. 1 doubles player and a net specialist, was kept rooted in the backcourt by the big Swede's 161 kph second serves and deep, consistent groundstrokes.

The \$714,250 tournament is sponsored by Comcast.

Becker, Stich in EuroCard semis

One loss to Yevgeny Kafelnikov was enough to teach Boris Becker a lesson.

Five days after losing to Kafelnikov in Milan, top-seeded Becker beat the 21-year-old rising Russian star

7-6 (7-4), 7-6 (7-1) Friday to reach the semifinals of the \$2.25-million EuroCard Open.

Michael Stich, the fifth seed, defeated Alexander Volkov 6-2, 7-5 to make it a German sweep over Russia.

Stich's victory set up an explosive semifinal against Becker, his on-and-off Davis Cup partner and rival.

In other quarterfinals, Richard Krajicek blasted his way past Magnus Larsson 6-3, 6-7 (9-11), 7-6 (7-5), while Martin Damm beat Jan Siemerink 6-4, 6-4.

Becker avenged the loss to Kafelnikov in Sunday's final of the Muratti Tennis Indoor in Milan, where the Russian won in three tight sets after

No. 7 next week despite his loss Friday.

Kafelnikov has been weakened by a cold since he arrived here and battled fever and dizzy spells during his first two matches. He required treatment for a bleeding nose in the 11th game of his match against Becker.

"In the morning I felt better, the cold is going away, but my body is tired. Every time my body is tired, my nose starts bleeding," Kafelnikov said.

After winning the first-set tiebreaker, Becker, the No. 3 in the world, broke for a 2-0 lead in the second set. But he immediately dropped his own serve and allowed Kafelnikov to stay in the match.

In the 12th game, Kafelnikov survived two match points. On the first Becker hit a forehand passing shot long, on the second Kafelnikov produced a service winner after having set up Becker's match point with a double fault.

Becker rolled through the tiebreaker and finished off the match after one hour, 45 minutes with his 16th ace.

"I feel I'm able to hit the important shots when it matters. I'm moving faster than in many years. I hope it's going to be a very exciting 1995," he said.

Kafelnikov said he was under pressure the entire match.

"He was more focused than in Milan, he really wanted to beat me, especially here in Germany," Kafelnikov said. "He was better today."

Krajicek overwhelmed Larsson with 29 aces to reach his second semifinal of the year. He will now meet Damm.

The hard-hitting Dutchman cruised through the first set after breaking for a 4-2 lead.

That was the only break of the match, which lasted one hour and 54 minutes.

Krajicek wasted two match points in the second-set tiebreaker and one more in the decisive tiebreaker. But he converted the next with a service winner.

"I am now quite satisfied with my game. After my shoulder injury I am now able to serve 100 per cent," Krajicek said.

Larsson missed the chance of becoming the highest-ranked Swede on the IBM/ATP Tour. Stefan Edberg is No. 14, and Larsson, who is now No. 15, would have climbed to No. 12 had he won Friday.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Zola Budd expecting a baby

BLOEMFONTEIN, South Africa (AP) — South African cross-country champion Zola Budd-Pieterse and her husband Mike have announced they are to become parents in October. Budd-Pieterse, 28, former world cross-country champion, said she was "absolutely delighted" and that the timing was "just perfect." "My gynaecologist has informed me that I do not have to withdraw from the South African cross-country team to go to Durban," she told the domestic news agency SABA. "But I will be chatting to the selectors in the next couple of days to see if I am mentally and physically in shape to run the World Championships," she said. Budd-Pieterse first came to prominence when she broke the world junior 5,000 metre record as a 17-year-old barefoot runner. In that year she set seven world junior records and five South African records.

Nantes goalkeeper in hospital

PARIS (R) — Nantes goalkeeper Eric Loussouaran was taken to hospital with concussion after colliding with team mate Christian Karembeu while training on Saturday. Loussouaran remained conscious after being hit on the back of the head but needed medical checks. It was too early to say whether Loussouaran would be fit to play for the French League leaders in Tuesday's UEFA Cup quarter-final at Bayer Leverkusen, club sources said. Nantes have already lost two goalkeepers since the start of the season. First choice David Marraud saw his season end because of a serious then deputy Dominique Casagrande suffered a hand injury.

Princess Anne on horseback in U.A.E.

DUBAI (AP) — Britain's Princess Anne rode across 35 kilometres of rough, dusty desert flats with Elan Friday, but could not get among the first finishers during the gruelling endurance race. She was accompanied by the United Arab Emirates' Crown Prince, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, during the horse race held at Jebel Ali. The race took about one hour and 15 minutes. Princess Anne was riding an Arabian and dismounted once during the rough stages to give her colt a rest before finishing 16th among 36 participants in the Desert Challenge Endurance Ride.

Blair wins 2nd straight 500-metre race

INZELL, Germany (AP) — Bonnie Blair, who is retiring this season as the most successful American woman Olympian of all time, won her 500-metre race Saturday for the second day in a row at a speedskating World Cup meet. Blair, a five-time Olympic champion, clocked 40.73 seconds for a close victory over Canada's Susan Auch at 40.76. Blair won over the same distance Friday in 40.56, while Shihko Kusunose of Japan was timed in 40.32. Blair will retire after the season's final races in Calgary, Canada, where she won her first medal in 1988.

Milan director questioned over transfer

MILAN (R) — Italian magistrates on Friday questioned the managing director of European soccer champions AC Milan over alleged irregularities involving the transfer of Gianluigi Lentini from Torino in 1992. "The reason I'm here is for Lentini deal which as far as I'm concerned was perfectly legal," managing director Adriano Galliani told reporters after 30 minutes of questioning. Galliani is the right-hand of Milan club owner Silvio Berlusconi, the media magnate and former Italian Prime Minister. Milan anti-graft magistrates have questioned Galliani several times over the deal which took Italian international winger Lentini to the club three years ago.

Ertl wins in Wachter's absence

MARIBOR, Slovenia (AFP) — Germany's Martina Ertl made the most of Austria's Anita Wachter's injury enforced absence to snatch the women's World Cup giant slalom Saturday. Ertl, who was lying second to local heroine Spela Pretnar after the first run, proved stronger on the second to claim her first ever giant slalom victory with a combined time of 2:16.88. The 21-year-old Ertl's previous best placing in the giant had been a fourth last season at Mammoth. Despite the defeat of Pretnar, the 10,000 strong Slovene crowd still had plenty to cheer about. Their skiers filled three of the top five places.

Kenya sweep IAAF athletics meeting

NAIROBI (AFP) — Paul Tergat led a Kenyan clean sweep in the Nairobi International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) Cross Country Challenge meeting held at Ngong Racecourse Saturday. Tergat, the Kenya Armed Forces clerical officer, who is bent on stepping into the shoes of another Kenyan Army compatriot, William Siegi, as World Cross champion, clocked a winning time of 35 minutes 30.02 seconds. Simon Chemoiwo, a budding Kenyan international long distance track star, was second in 35:30.60. Ishmail Kirui was third in 35:34.59.

Novotna advances in Linz

LINZ, Austria (AP) — Top seed Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic and three unseeded players Friday advanced to the semi-final in the \$161,000 WTA indoor tennis tournament. Novotna defeated Austrian Petra Schwarz-Ritter 6-1, 1-6, 6-2. In the semi-final she faces Meike Babel of Germany who swiftly ousted sixth seed Sandra Cecchini of Italy.

Baseball talks to resume Monday

SCOTTSDALE (AFP) — Negotiations between striking major league baseball players and team owners will resume here Monday, two days before the scheduled start of exhibition games.

Those pre-season training contests are the centre of the latest furor between the union and management. The union has declared anyone taking part in such games will be considered a strike-breaker.

About two-thirds of minor leaguers, including former basketball star Michael Jordan, are expected to honour the picket line and refuse to play. The rest are about to be placed in the centre of the controversy.

"Spring training games will be scab games because playing those games will require clubs to replace the major leaguers who typically play them," union leader Don Fehr said in a memo.

Clubs have threatened to send home any players unwilling to take part in the games, with the New York Yankees already ditching minor leaguers Mike DeLeon, Mark Carper and Bubba Carpenter.

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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠AQJ98 ♠AK9 ♠A8 ♠A10
What is your opening bid?
A.—You have a five-loser hand with only 22 high-card points, so the hand is not strong enough for a demand bid in spades. However, since your hand is balanced, there's no reason not to open two no trump—a five-card major doesn't bar you from making the most descriptive bid.

Q.2—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠63 ♠AQ105 ♠92 ♠A982

The bidding has proceeded:
West North East South
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ ?

What action do you take?
A.—It is simply a matter of competing now or hope you can get later. We think it is safer to get into the bidding before the opponents know exactly how strong they are, so we would make a takeout double despite the risk that we might get caught between two strong hands.

Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠AS ♠542 ♠54 ♠AKQ52

Partner opens the bidding with two no trump. What do you bid now?
A.—If you have the modern range of 21-22, make the value bid of six no trump. If your range is the old-fashioned 22-24, you should make a grand slam by raising to five no trump. That's forcing to slam and asks partner to bid a grand slam with a maximum.

Q.4—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠Q76 ♠10642 ♠3 ♠A9643

Partner opens the bidding with one no trump. What action do you take?
A.—One no trump is probably not your best spot on this hand. The problem is how do you maneuver into the right strain without running the risk of getting into worse trouble? Pass—your high cards must be enough to give partner a shot at the contract.

Q.5—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠K43 ♠AS ♠AK963 ♠A84

What is your opening bid?
A.—Even if your range for one no trump is 16-18, this hand is too strong for that action. Your wealth of prime cards, undervalued in the point count, and five-card suit make this hand worth nearer 20 points than 18. Open one diamond, intending to jump in no trump at your next turn no matter what partner responds.

Q.6—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠Q83 ♠AJ73 ♠K1092 ♠A6

The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass

What do you bid now?
A.—We have always been strong advocates of raising partner's one-level major-suit response with three-card support and a ruffing value—if there is no better bid. Here, your balanced hand with stoppers in all suits suggests one no trump would be a better choice.

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A taxpayer service specialist from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service will be at the American Embassy in Amman from March 6 to March 9 to assist U.S. taxpayers.

Two special tax seminars will be conducted on Monday March 6 and Tuesday March 7 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the United States Information Service auditorium at the Embassy. All U.S. citizens, residents or non-residents, with general tax questions (i.e. How to file? What to file?) will be welcome to attend one of those seminars. No reservation is necessary.

Individual assistance will be provided by appointment on March 6 to 9. Each taxpayer is advised to have a copy of his or her last filed return and to have all papers well organized to the extent possible when appearing for an appointment. The IRS representative will assist by answering questions but will not fill your tax return forms. Appointments may be made by calling 820-101, extension 2062.

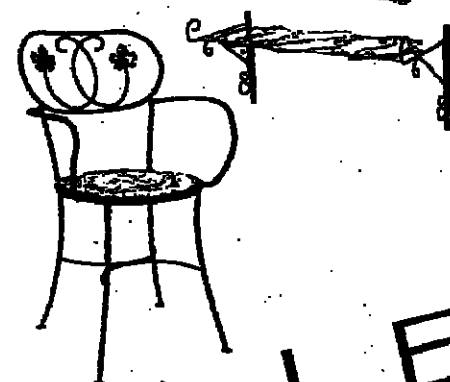
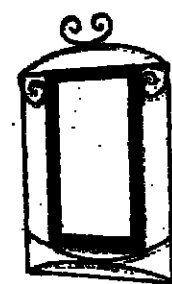
Income tax forms and information booklets are now available in the consular section of the embassy.

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Russian nuclear minister scoffs at American threat

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia's top nuclear official sounds unimpressed by Newt Gingrich's threat to try to cut off U.S. aid if Russia presses ahead with developing Iran's atomic-power programme.

"I'm not worried," said Viktor N. Mikhailov, minister for nuclear power. "What's \$215 million for Russia?"

He was referring to a key U.S. aid programme for dismantling and securing Russian nuclear weapons material.

In an interview with the Associated Press, Mr. Mikhailov reported that 200 Russian nuclear specialists are already in Iran working on its first power reactor, and acknowledged that the Moscow-Tehran agreement does not spell out how to deal with Iran's spent nuclear fuel, potential source of weapons material.

Mr. Mikhailov signed a contract last month in Tehran under which his ministry will complete installation of a power reactor at Bushehr, in southern Iran, whose construction was suspended in the late 1970s. A second contract, for completing a second Bushehr unit, is ready for signing, he said.

In addition, a side "working protocol" may lead to two more power units at Bushehr, a university research reactor, training in Russia for Iranian specialists, and other future facilities "that I cannot discuss now," Mr. Mikhailov said.

Russia and Iran say the nuclear complex will be used only for peaceful purposes. But the U.S. administration contends the Iranians have plans to develop nuclear weapons, and has pressured

Russia since 1992 to forgo cooperation with Tehran.

In the latest U.S. warning, House Speaker Gingrich said last week that "we should cut off all aid to Russia" if it persists in developing Iran's programme.

Mr. Mikhailov, whose ministry produces Russian nuclear weapons, told the AP that he appreciates U.S. aid, particularly \$215 million for securing the plutonium and other material from weapons dismantled under U.S.-Russian arms-control accords.

But Russia has lost even more money because of a U.S.-Russian agreement against "dumping" its ministry's cheap uranium on the American market, he said in the interview Friday.

"It is more important to me to have free trade," he said. "I would have earned \$450 million over three years (on uranium). I don't want to put my hand in the American taxpayer's pocket. We want to earn our money."

The ministry earns \$1.2 billion a year by exporting products, he said. "What is \$215 million for Russia?"

At one point, the Russian cabinet member was dismissive of U.S. threats, saying, "the Americans will never break these (aid) agreements, because they are profitable to them" — that is, to U.S. companies participating in the weapons security programme.

At another point, his voice rising, he suggested he himself might break the agreements. If Washington's pressure continues, he is "prepared to close down" the U.S.-Russian discussions on joint oversight of dismantled weapons material, he said.

Alleged bombing mastermind says he is political hostage

NEW YORK (Agencies) — Ramzi Ahmad Yousef wants a pen, a notebook and a vigorous defence for his trial on charges he planned the World Trade Centre bombing, his lawyer says.

Attorney Roy Kulcar said Friday that getting the writing utensils might not be so easy for a man who is penniless, isolated and guarded every minute of the day.

Mr. Yousef does not even have the money for a toothbrush and toothpaste, Kulcar said.

Prosecutors contend Mr. Yousef heaped buy and store the chemicals used to make a bomb that exploded in a parking garage under the World Trade Centre in New York on Feb. 26, 1993. Six people were killed and over 1,000 injured.

The 27-year-old suspect allegedly left the United States the day of the bombing and remained free until two weeks ago, when he was arrested in Pakistan and extradited to the United States.

On Friday, Mr. Kulcar was appointed Mr. Yousef's lawyer and immediately complained in federal court about his client's treatment at the Metropolitan Correctional Centre.

"He said he feels he's a

political prisoner," Mr. Kulcar told U.S. District Court Judge Kevin Duffy. "In a sense, he's being held hostage to account for the acts of other people and other nationalities."

Mr. Yousef has been allowed to make only one telephone call — to a relative — since his arrest and is being watched all the time, Mr. Kulcar said.

"He told me it's a very degrading thing to have to go to the bathroom and have somebody sitting outside watching," said Mr. Kulcar, who has met with Mr. Yousef for a total of about three hours.

Mr. Kulcar said his client told him he wants a strong defence — not a plea bargain — against charges he masterminded the bombing.

Mr. Duffy said Mr. Yousef was not due back in court for two months to give him time to read the 8,000-page transcript of last year's trial of four co-defendants in the trade centre bombing. They were convicted and are serving life sentences without parole.

The judge also told Mr. Kulcar he might allow lawyers to be appointed for Mr. Yousef and invited the defendant to meet with him if necessary.

Egypt engineers vow to stop court takeover

CAIRO (R) — Hundreds of Egyptian engineers held a sit-in on Saturday and vowed to protect their Islamist-controlled union against a court administrator.

A court ruling on Friday, which dissolved the leadership of the 220,000-strong Engineers' Union and sequestered its assets, escalated conflict between the Egyptian government and Muslim fundamentalists who dominate the union movement.

Many engineers gathered at the union headquarters in downtown Cairo and others slept there to resist the takeover.

"This decision is unprecedented and dangerous. Never before has an administrator been appointed to seize the union, its documents and money and administer its affairs," Mohammad Bishr, secretary-general of the union, told Reuters.

Union leaders decided at a crisis meeting on Friday to mobilise members at its headquarters on Saturday morning when the court-appointed administrator, Mohammad Sabri Abdul Gayyed, was

expected to arrive.

But there was no sign of government action by early afternoon.

"We're against armed confrontation but they will create one. We'll not leave the premises. We won't hand them the documents. We will allow them to take over," said Hicham Khodr at the union headquarters.

But Mr. Bishr said the union would avoid a government trap of provoking them to break the law and would resist the court order by "all legal and legitimate means."

Islamists started taking over the unions in the late 1980s and gradually turned them into powerful platforms of opposition to the government in Egypt, where the ruling party dominates a tame parliament and opposition parties are largely ineffective.

Unions accused the government of corruption, oppose Egyptian foreign policy including normalisation of ties with Israel, and have vied for public sympathy by providing social services.



RANDOM VIOLENCE: Mourners pay their last respects at the funerals of 20 men who were killed in two attacks on Shiite Muslim mosques in Karachi on Saturday. Thousands

attended the funerals amidst high tension and sporadic rioting after gunmen opened fire towards worshippers (see page 4) (AFP photo)

GIA behind jail riot — paper

TUNIS (Agencies) — The Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the most feared of Algeria's militant factions, was the organiser of an Algiers prison mutiny in which 100 people were killed, an Algerian newspaper said on Saturday.

A warlord recruited at Sekadik high-security jail by the GIA had smuggled in four pistols and six grenades used in the mutiny which was crushed on Wednesday, the daily Al Watan said.

"It is the GIA who organised the entire bloody operation," Al Watan said, citing unnamed "reliable sources."

Algerian authorities said 100 people, 96 of them prisoners, died during the mutiny which lasted more than 24 hours.

The militant Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) accused the authorities of killing 200 detainees in a deliberate massacre.

Al Watan said Abdul Hak Layada, one of the GIA's founders, and Abdul Kader Hachani, a FIS leader, were the main leaders who organised the mutiny and escape attempt from inside the prison.

It did not say what happened to them during or after the violence.

The paper said two other prominent fundamentalist prisoners — Yaléf Cherati, former member of the FIS consultative council, and one of the GIA founders known as Al Wed, or "the Pakistani" — were killed in the violence.

Previous Algerian press reports had said the two men had probably been killed in the mutiny which broke out on Tuesday.

Algerian Radio reported Saturday that Tembarek Boumaaraifi, the accused assassin of President Mohammed Boudiafi, survived the bloody mutiny.

The radio, quoting "reliable sources," said reports that Boumaaraifi was among those killed were incorrect. He is "perfectly alive," the radio said without elaborating.

The fate of Boumaaraifi, a Boudiafi bodyguard whose exact role in the 1992 assassination was never fully understood, has been the subject of much press speculation here in Algeria.

Saturday's radio report confirmed that the dead included a senior FIS official, Ikhlaf Cherati.

A group of lawyers representing inmates in the Serkadji jail issued a communique Saturday demanding a "neutral" investigation into the killings by Algerian and foreign jurists and representatives of prisoners' families.

The lawyers said they were "unconvinced by the official version" of the incident, when security forces stormed the prison to end a mutiny during which four guards were killed.

Al Watan said 360 of the 650 Muslim fundamentalist inmates of Serkadji took part in the mutiny.

Algerian radio said on Friday that Interior Minister Abdul Rahman mezziane Cherif was named the head of a committee to investigate the mutiny.

Albright: Oman supports U.S. on Iraq sanctions

MUSCAT (Agencies) — U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright said on Saturday that Oman agreed with Washington on the need to maintain sanctions against Iraq.

Ms. Albright, on a tour to rally support for U.S. efforts to maintain the sanctions, was speaking at a news conference in the Omani capital Muscat following talks with Sultan Qaboos.

"I expect that we will have (Oman's) support," she said.

"It was pleased to find that His Majesty's views on the question of maintaining sanctions coincided with our own," she said. "I also informed His Majesty of the readiness of the United States government to explore means of helping to relieve, within the sanctions framework, the pressing humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people."

Diplomats say there is growing concern in some Gulf Arab states about the effects of sanctions on Iraqi civilians.

Ms. Albright said her tour was aimed at building a "seven-country blocking coalition" against French and Russian moves to ease sanctions before Iraq complies in full with U.N. resolutions imposed since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Oman is the only Gulf country to have maintained good relations with Iraq and in the past few months has repeated calls for a lifting of the sanctions, which have crippled the Iraqi economy.

She arrived here from Britain late Friday and is due in Kuwait on Sunday. Other stops include the Czech Republic, Italy, possibly Argentina and Honduras.

"We consider it absolutely vital that (Iraq President) Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi regime continue to abide by all the sanctions resolu-

tions," Ms. Albright told reporters as she arrived.

Ms. Albright reiterated that Iraq has to show compliance on several issues, such as the return of Kuwaiti military equipment and accounting for missing Kuwaiti people.

"As far as carrying out their obligations in terms of weapons of mass destruction, we believe there are significant gaps in the information that has been made available and that it is very important that these gaps be filled," she said.

Rolf Ekeus, the chief U.N. arms inspector, left Baghdad last week and said he had not been able to resolve differences over Iraq's past biological warfare research.

U.S. officials said Ms. Albright, travelling at the request of President Bill Clinton, wanted to head off any action to suspend the oil embargo against Iraq.

Russia and France may introduce a resolution to lift it when a U.N. report on the state of Iraq's weapons is due on April 10.

Ms. Albright said after a meeting with British Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd in London on Friday that Iraq had to live up to its Security Council obligations.

Pressed by journalists on the suffering of the Iraqi people, Ms. Albright said: "Saddam Hussein has had the opportunity to alleviate the suffering of his people ever since the end of the war."

"He seems to have enough money for massive troop movements, enough money to destroy the marsh hamlets of the Shiites in the south, enough money to build palaces for his regime. They are phoney crocodile tears... that he sheds on behalf of his people."

Iraq on Saturday poured scorn on Ms. Albright saying it was too late for her to stop growing support at the Security Council for an end to

sanctions against Iraq.

"With the growing pro-Iraq lobby, the U.S. fears the waning of its influence. It has embarked on a desperate attempt to win more time to have the sanctions continued," declared the Iraqi government Al Jumhuriya.

The newspaper said Ms. Albright's trip shows an "insane desire to increase the suffering of the Iraqi people's and 'the arbitrary and extortionist methods adopted' when U.S. policy is opposed."

"It also reveals the strength of Iraq's position and the fairness of its cause, especially in view of its compliance with all relevant U.N. resolutions," the paper said.

The Iraq's animosity towards Ms. Albright is personal.

Last October, when Iraq sent troops to the Kuwait border to attract attention to the sanctions issue, Baghdad newspapers printed poems calling Ms. Albright "a serpent" and accusing her of picking a fight.

The United States backed by Britain has spearheaded opposition to any easing of the sanctions, and the U.S. offensive was to ensure that a maximum number of countries will not support the "premature effort" by Paris and Moscow to end the embargo, a U.S. diplomat said Thursday at the United Nations.

Ms. Albright said: "We believe that Iraq has to fulfil all its obligations under United Nations resolutions" passed during and after the January-February 1991 Gulf war.

In Kuwait she will pass on a message from U.S. President Clinton to Emir Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah.

Her visit will coincide with the fourth anniversary of Kuwait's liberation from a seven-month Iraqi occupation achieved by a U.S.-led international coalition in 1991.

Aideed warns against looting

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Somalia's most powerful warlord, Mohammad Farah Aideed, on Saturday warned people not to plunder the city's port and airport after the U.S.-guarded pullout of the last U.N. troops next week but U.N. officials were sceptical as to whether his appeal would be heard.

Somalis lobbed tear-gas Saturday at the gate of the U.N.-held airport in Mogadishu and close to the runway used by planes taking U.N. troops home.

At the gate, Pakistani troops on the ground and aboard armoured personnel carriers clapped handkerchiefs to their faces and poured water over their heads as the stinging gas swirled in around noon (0900 GMT).

The U.N. troops closed the airport gate for about 20 minutes, then used sticks to chase out infiltrators.

Inside the razor-wire, an advance guard of Operation United Shield prepared for the landing of U.S. and Italian marines on Monday and Tuesday to protect the withdrawal of the last 2,500 U.N. troops.

The U.S.-led task force's operational commander, Marine Lieutenant General Tony Zinni, flew in by helicopter from his command ship, the Belleau Wood, to inspect the airport, held by Pakistani troops, and the adjoining port, held by Bangladeshi soldiers.

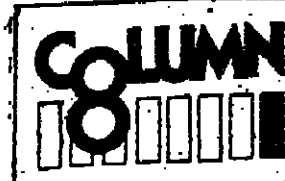
Both contingents face tense crowds of would-be looters who surge through the gates every time they are opened for vehicles.

Gen. Aideed, who controls south Mogadishu, on Saturday told leaders of his Somali National Alliance not to allow looting of equipment which will be left behind at both facilities after the marines pull out, his faction's radio station reported.

For the last stage of the withdrawal of the U.N. troops and some senior civilians, the task force, composed of 10,000 troops from six nations aboard 18 warships, will have more than 2,000 U.S. and Italian marines on the ground equipped with massive firepower, and gunships circling overhead. The force fears "spill-over" fighting if rival militias fight.

Gen. Aideed and his north Mogadishu rival, self-styled "President" Ali Mahdi Mohammad, have appointed a joint committee to run the port and airport, but many observers consider that agreement fragile, and fear battles for control of both facilities, with their opportunities to import arms and ammunition into a country riven for generations by clan warfare.

Militiamen are still ignoring a peace-pact the two leaders signed last Tuesday which banned all weapons from the streets and ordered battle-wagons known as "technicals" to be confined to designated areas.



Writer Francoise Sagan sentenced for drugs

PARIS (R) — French writer Francoise Sagan was given a 12-month suspended jail sentence on charges of using cocaine and giving it to others. Sagan, an overnight celebrity at the age of 18 for her first novel Bonjour Tristesse, a love story about spoilt children of the bourgeoisie, was also fined 40,000 francs (\$7,700) and placed on probation for 18 months. The prosecution had asked for an 18-month suspended jail term against the 59-year-old author who has a previous conviction on drug charges.

Sagan, who did not attend when the verdict was read, told the court earlier this month she had consumed cocaine to help her work because she was depressed by the deaths of close friends. She said she no longer used it. She had been quoted as telling an investigating magistrate: "I believe I have a right to destroy myself as long as it does not harm anyone. If I feel like swallowing a glass of caustic soda, that's my own problem." The daughter of an industrialist, Sagan published her first book in 1954. Her latest novel, Un Chagrin De Passage, relates a day in the life of a man told he has cancer and six months left to live.

Indian court amends Christian divorce law

NEW DELHI (AFP) — The High Court of the southern Indian state of Kerala Friday amended a law applying to Christians by making desertion or cruelty sufficient grounds for divorce, the Press Trust of India said. The three-judge bench ruled that Christians need not have to prove adultery to seek a divorce if they were maltreated or deserted by their spouses, the news agency said.

According to the old law, Christians could seek divorce on three grounds — "necessitous adultery, adultery coupled with desertion and adultery coupled with cruelty," along with proof of the extramarital liaisons. Christian women in Kerala had complained that the law prevented them from seeking a divorce from cruel or irresponsible husbands who were not necessarily sexually unfaithful. Kerala has a sizeable Christian population, most of whom are Roman Catholics.

Nigerian wins environmental prize

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — A California foundation said Friday it is awarding an environmental prize to a Nigerian minority rights activist who is on trial for murder. The Goldman Environmental Foundation, founded in 1990 by two California philanthropists, announced that Ken Saro-Wiwa was this year's winner of its Grassroots Environmental Prize for Africa. The foundation had been due to announce the winners of its six annual Grassroots Environmental Prizes — one for each of the inhabited continents — in San Francisco on April 17. But it said it broke with tradition by announcing Mr. Saro-Wiwa's prize early to draw international attention to his trial before a three-man tribunal in Port Harcourt, southeastern Nigeria. Mr. Saro-Wiwa, 53, president of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), and four others are charged in the murder of four leaders in volatile Ogoniland. They deny the charges.

Frozen embryo test tube baby born in China

BEIJING (R) — China's first test-tube baby conceived from a frozen embryo has been born in Beijing — a girl weighing 3.15 kg (6.9 lbs) and measuring 50 cm (19.6 inches), the Xinhua News Agency said Saturday. The baby girl, born at the Number Three Hospital affiliated with the Beijing Medical University, was one of six frozen embryos implanted in a 32-year-old woman last May. Xinhua quoted hospital gynaecologist Zhang Lihua as saying, "So far, more than 80 test-tube babies have been born at the hospital, with the success rate for conceiving test-tube babies at the hospital at 28 per cent."